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EXPLORING INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE THROUGH PRACTICE-BASED INSTITUTIONAL WORK: THE EMERGENCE AND DECLINE OF ACTIVITY BASED LEARNING (ABL) IN TAMILNADU, INDIA

By

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED: ANISHA SHANMUGAM **DATE:** 2nd February, 2020

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DEDICATIONS

To all the government school teachers in India who try to make a difference…

ABSTRACT

This research draws on the concept of institutional work that refers to the purposive actions of individuals aimed at creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions in order to explore institutional change. As approaches to institutional change were either mechanistic and contingent (caused by external structural forces) or voluntaristic and dramatic (brought about by individual agency), this research responds to the call to develop a micro-dynamic approach to institutional change which can be exhibited through individuals' daily work practices. Although numerous studies have explored institutional change through an institutional work lens, they loosely draw on the concept of practice and fail to explore in-depth the elements that constitute work such as skills of individual, material used; the latter element having gained prominence amongst institutional scholars. Based on the practice foundation of institutional work, this research adopts a three-element framework (meaning, material and competence) to foreground the elements that constitute institutional work. As a theoretical framework, it responds to the demand to account for the role of materials within institutional work and change and through this micro-perspective it contributes to the growing institutional scholars' interest in exploring the 'coalface' of institutions. The unfolding nature of institutional change is explored in the context of ABL, a teaching-learning practice implemented in Government schools in two cities- Chennai and Puducherry in India. Based on a case study methodology, semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to gather experiences of participants involved in the implementation of the ABL practice. Empirical findings explore the different forms of institutional work that contribute to creating and maintaining the ABL practice and also highlight the role of materiality in relation to the decline of ABL that occurred sooner in the case of Puducherry than Chennai. Theoretical contributions of these empirical findings are discussed in relation to different facets of institutional change.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABL: Activity Based Learning

CBSE: Central Board of Secondary Education

DPEP: District Primary Education Programme

NCERT: National Council of Educational Research and Training

NCF: National Curriculum Framework

NPE: National Policy on Education

RTE: Right to Education

SABL: Simplified Activity Based Learning

SSA: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

SCERT: State Council of Educational Research and Training

UEE: Universalisation of Elementary Education

USSE: Uniform System of School Education

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Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. Motivation for research: Personal and contextual rationale

This thesis emerged as a result of an interest in exploring how innovative practices unfold within organisations, underpinned by a curiosity to understand change. Inspired by the idea of change being the only constant, I was particularly eager to comprehend how the change in practices occurred in the context of Indian school education given my personal experiences of being a student within the system. A quest for further knowledge was fuelled by my passion for and belief in education at the grassroot level (such as school education) being the cornerstone of, and a vehicle for, societal growth and development. Having been educated in an Indian school classroom[1] that required me to memorize contents present in the textbook, I was a passive receiver of the knowledge imparted by the dominant teacher, and rarely challenged them. With my undergraduate learning experience in an Indian college being similar to my school experience, doing a master's degree in the UK was a steep learning curve for me, having to engage in meaningful learning and critical thinking; a skill that was new for me. On successful completion of the course, having experienced a more holistic application-based approach to learning, I was inquisitive to know if such approaches existed in India, particularly at the school education level.

Based on my research interests in change, while exploring some innovative teaching-learning practices which had been implemented in the Indian schools, I was fascinated by an innovative pedagogical approach known as Activity Based Learning (ABL) that was implemented in government schools in my home state, Tamil Nadu, in south-east India. ABL targeted primary school students aged 6-11 years, requiring them to engage and learn through activities in order to develop various skills. It was a method that involved the use of a variety of material such as learning cards, a learning ladder, and mathematics and science kits (UNICEF, 2012) and thereby, a marked contrast to the traditional method that previously existed in schools. The traditional method characterised by teacher-dominated classrooms, focused on students memorizing content present in the textbooks in order to excel in examinations (Alexander, 2001; Bhattacharjea et al., 2011; Clarke, 2003) and thereby contributed to low standards of education (GoI, 1992a). As a result, various education policies had advocated the shift from this teacher-centred, textbook-oriented rote learning approach to a more meaningful, active, and potentially 'burden-free' learning amongst students (GoI, 1992b; NCF, 2005). One such learner-centred approach was ABL. As the nature of change to ABL was rather radical and in clear contrast to the previous practices in schools, exploring different practices that supported the emergence of the ABL method formed the basis of this thesis. During the exploratory stages of the research, in investigating appropriate sites for the

[1] I studied in a reputed private Catholic school in Chennai, India. The traditional teacher-dominated method was common across public (government) and private schools in India.

case study of ABL, I became aware that ABL had succeeded, and failed, in differing contexts. While speaking to a stakeholder, I was told that ABL was successful in the city of Chennai, the state capital of Tamil Nadu and was considered to be the home-ground of ABL. ABL was initially piloted in 2003 in Chennai and then rolled out through the state of Tamil Nadu in 2008. It was overhauled in 2012, and subsequently declined in 2018. However, in Puducherry, a Union Territory (UT)[2] which is also a city but has a different jurisdictional disposition in comparison to a State, government schools had attempted to implement ABL, but had failed to sustain the practice (2008-12). The case of Puducherry was also interesting particularly since it was geographically located within the state of Tamil Nadu and only 100 miles away from Chennai. So, I was intrigued as to how the institution of ABL, a marked contrast to the previous traditional method had emerged in Chennai and in Puducherry. Further, why had ABL declined sooner in the case of Puducherry in comparison to Chennai?

The change within this empirical context from a traditional method to an ABL method was rooted in a shift in the meaning framework of pedagogical practices; transitioned from teacher-centred approach towards a learner-centred approach. Rather than attributing the cause of this shift *exclusively* to, the broader structural level factors in the form of changes in education policy at federal and state level, or emerging due to initiatives taken by powerful individuals within the education system- both of which happened in the case of ABL (that will be discussed later), this research positions itself to exploring the unfolding of change through the day to day practice of individuals, thereby taking on a micro-perspective view of change. The next section provides an overview of theoretical concepts adopted within institutional and practice theory and a brief description of the research questions is presented. Thereafter, the methodology and findings of my empirical work are stated, followed by a section highlighting the theoretical contributions of my research and concludes with an overall structure of the thesis.

1.2. Overview of theoretical concepts

This section provides a summary of the concept of institutional change, institutional logics and institutional work and how the practice perspective contributes to these concepts. Institutional theory is a school of thought within organisation studies that explores the ways in which institutions impact actions exhibited through organisational behaviour (Greenwood et al., 2008; Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006; Scott, 2001). With a stable view of institutions that brought "stability and meaning to social life" (Scott, 2001, p.48) the theory traditionally focused on how institutions govern action, with change being explored in terms of how stable institutional arrangements brought about homogeneous organisations, and a persistence to institutional norms (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Meyer and Rowan, 1977; Zucker,

[2] A Union Territory is an administrative division (like a state) in India. They are usually governed by the central government. Puducherry is an exception since it has its own legislature and cabinet of ministers due to special constitutional amendments; it is given partial statehood

1977). As the theory was critiqued for its preference towards stability and inertia (Hasselbladh and Kallinikos, 2000; Yang, 2003) in response, since the 1990s, attention turned towards understanding institutional transformation, and the unfolding of institutional change gathered momentum within institutional theory (Greenwood et al., 2017; Micelotta et al., 2017). In contrast, institutions were then conceptualised as being dynamic and the products of purposive action (Jepperson, 1991; Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006)[3]; the focus was on the institution itself, with the actions of the individuals bringing about institutional change.

Institutional change conceived as a "change in forms or state" of an institution (Hargrave and Van de Ven, 2006, p.866) can be explored through multiple approaches based on different triggers, processes, and outcomes of change. For instance, institutional transformation may occur due to *external/exogenous* macro-level factors such as a shift in regulation or policy (Oliver, 1992) while *endogenous elements* are exhibited through the individual agency (DiMaggio, 1988) or are precipitated through an individual's *practices* as they accomplish their work (Smets et al., 2012). As these approaches are explained in detail in section 2.2.1, I will briefly state the rationale for adopting a practice-based approach to institutional change in comparison to the first two approaches.

Based on exogenous factors, models that explored the stages of institutional change took on a rather mechanistic and contingent approach to institutional change (Delbridge and Edwards, 2008) with agency being theorized as passive and repetitive in nature (Lawrence et al., 2009b, p.1). On the other hand, endogenous factors that actively accounted for the role of individual agency as Institutional Entrepreneurs, portrayed these individuals to be 'heroic' in nature, having remarkable power and the characteristics to change institutions (Garud et al., 2007) and was criticised for its dramatic approach to change. As approaches to institutional change were either mechanistic and contingent (caused by external structural forces) or voluntaristic and dramatic (brought about by institutional entrepreneurs), there were calls to capture the complex and dynamic nature of institutional change by focusing on the micro-foundation of institutions (Barley, 2008). This is achieved through a practice perspective that situates the origin of institutional change within the practices of individuals (Smets and Jarzabkowski, 2013), rather than being triggered by exogenous factors or by the interests of institutional entrepreneurs.

Practices are sets of "sayings and doings" (Schatzki, 2002, p. 87) that consists of interconnected elements such knowledge, things and mental activities (Reckwitz, 2002) and are mediums through which individuals may bring about institutional change. The practice perspective to institutional change sits within a broader "practice turn" amongst institutional theorists who seek to understand the 'coalface' of institutions (Nicolini, 2012; Smets et al., 2017), particularly by exploring the material dimension within institutions and institutional change. As my research adopts a practice perspective

[3] The change in conceptualisation of institutions is also based on by a philosophical underpinning that is mentioned in the literature review section

towards change, the nature of institutional change is defined through a change in the meaning framework of institutions i.e. institutional logics and unfolding of change explored through forms of work[4] theorised as institutional work. These two theoretical concepts were adopted as both the concepts draw on aspects of practices, carry within them a material dimension and therefore are commensurate for exploring the unfolding of institutional change at grass root or 'micro' level.

Thornton and Ocasio (2008, p.101) refer to institutional logics as "socially constructed, historical pattern of material practices, assumptions, values…" that guide behaviour. As highlighted in the definition above, logics are constituted by material practices and is one of the foundational pillars. In my research, I defined institutional change based on the shift from one logic to another logic exhibited through the practices since practices are considered as material enactments of institutional logic (Sahlin and Wedlin, 2008; Thornton et al., 2012). Further elaborated in section 2.3, this conceptualisation of institutional change based on logics, contributes to the dynamic nature of change in terms of how logics unfold through the daily practices of the individual (Zilber, 2013) and therefore compliments my research.

Institutional work refers to the "purposive action of individuals and organisations aimed at creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions" (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006, p.215). As this body of literature draws on the sociology of practices (Bourdieu, 1977; Giddens, 1984), the purposive action takes the form of practices carried out by individuals/practitioners that are directed at institutional transformation. In this research, individuals who are equipped with the skills and the agency enact the practice, or forms of institutional work aimed at creating, maintaining, or disrupting institutions. Based on the need for a more comprehensive engagement of a practice perspective within institutional approaches that generates a more nuanced and deeper understanding of institutional approaches (Smets et al., 2017), my research adopts Shove et al's (2012) three-element practice framework as an analytical tool. This framework conceptualises practice as being constituted of three elements- *meaning, material and competence* with the links between these elements being created, sustained or disrupted by the practitioners, and resulting in the emergence, maintenance, and disruption of the practice. Although this framework has an implicit view of practitioners' agency being depicted through the enactment of practice, this research aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of agency by drawing upon Emirbayer and Mische (1998) temporal dimensions of agency. Agency that refers to actor's social engagement in relation to meaning (ibid) is adopted to understand the various interpretations practitioners draw within the practice and the possible implications of those forms of agency. This is further elaborated in section 2.4.2 and section 2.5.5.

[4] Based on the seminal article by Lawrence and Suddaby (2006), work means the mental or physical effort which connects to a goal i.e. a practice or institutional work aimed at institutional transformation

Drawing on the concepts of institutional logics and institutional work also addresses the growing need to account for materiality in relation to institutions and institutional change (De Vaujany et al., 2019; Pinch, 2008). Materials not only serve as carriers of and a mechanism through which institutional logics can change (Jones et al., 2017) but are important tools for individuals when engaging in different forms of institutional work (De Vaujany et al., 2019). The significance of materiality is elaborated in section 2.2.2.

Overall, therefore, my research presents the unfolding nature of institutional change, with the nature of institutional change defined in terms of replacement of institutional logics and process of change explored through different forms of institutional work conceived in the form of practices. Such an approach aims to understand and present the dynamic nature of institutional change (Micelotta et al., 2017) and explore the 'coalface' of institutions (Powell and Rerup, 2017). Having introduced and provided the rationale for key theoretical concepts in relation to institutional change, the next sections discuss the research questions for this thesis.

1.3. Research questions

The overarching research question that guides this research is '*How does a practice-based approach to institutional work contribute to the understanding of institutional change?'.* This question aims to fill a gap in the literature in terms of the need to understand the dynamic nature of institutions and institutional change. This core question is answered through two sub-questions:

Firstly, *'How can the three-element practice framework contribute to an understanding of the micro-dynamics of institutional change?'* Based on the dynamic nature of practices, I will examine how the elements of the Shove et al (2012) framework and links between them provide deeper insight into institutional change. In particular, the links between the elements are analysed (through variations in the meaning element, as explored through dimensions of agency) in order to highlight the complexity of institutional change. Addressing this question will respond to the need to provide a complex dynamic view of institutional change (Micelotta et al., 2017) present within the literature.

Secondly, '*How do materials contribute to the maintenance and disruption of institutions?*' This question is developed since the material dimension has gained prominence amongst institutional scholars. It explores the role of material within the categories of institutional work (maintaining and disrupting) and also how material practices bring about institutional complexity (i.e. the incompatible prescription of logics) are explored. This exploration is positioned and highlighted within the process of institutional change and thereby addresses the under-examined role of material within institutions (Lawrence et al., 2013).

The next section discusses the methodological approach adopted for this research, and briefly presents the empirical findings.

1.4. Research methodology and outcomes

This research is underpinned by a relativist ontology and a social constructionist epistemology for a qualitative research design. In the ontological spectrum, this research is positioned towards relativism that believes in multiple realities based on mental constructions (Braun and Clarke, 2013). In terms of epistemology, it draws on the social constructionist approach, which argues that knowledge or meaningful reality is constructed by individuals (Creswell, 2014; Crotty, 1998). These philosophical world views are commensurate with the sociological approach, adopted in relation to the practice-based approach to institutional work and change, that focuses on the 'becoming' nature of institutions. The unfolding of institutional change is approached from a purely qualitative lens in order to obtain a deeper understanding of the phenomena of interest (the institution of ABL) (Creswell, 2014). Within various qualitative research designs, a case study methodology is adopted in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of the phenomena of interest by providing a contextual description and explanation of the case (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). This methodology also adopts a comparative lens to highlight the similarities and difference in terms of ABL related practices across two sites: Chennai and Puducherry, thereby providing a powerful explanation for the case (ibid).

As discussed in further detail in Chapter 3, an exploratory study was initially carried out to assess the viability of gathering data in Chennai, and also in Puducherry. Based on these exploratory interviews, the initial findings provided a strong rationale for adopting a comparative case study approach based on the two sites and assisted in developing the schedule for the main study. Primary data in the main study was collected through semi-structured interviews, and supported with relevant documents to enhance the reliability of study through triangulation (Miles et al., 2014). The sample for this research included key stakeholders such as teachers, headteachers, teacher trainers, and officials in order to obtain a holistic understanding of the institution of ABL (Fitzgerald and Dopson, 2009). Since interviews were bilingual (Tamil, the local language and English), they were audio-recorded, translated and then transcribed. As interview data constituted participants' experiences of ABL, thematic analysis was carried out to find patterns (similarities or difference) across the data (Gibson and Brown, 2009). By adopting a case study approach, my research accommodated unexpected changes in the field (discussed in Chapter 3) and highlighted an iterative approach to data analysis (see section 3.5.2). The empirical findings that emerged through these approaches are briefly presented below.

By drawing on the three-element practice framework, the different elements that constitute the various forms of creating and maintaining institutional work were identified in relation to ABL across the two sites: Chennai and Puducherry. In relation to first research sub-question, the institutional change unfolds through five different practices that were theorised in terms of institutional work categories: practices related to training (creating), monitoring (maintaining), and the three sub-practices of ABL (i.e. practice related to teacher's position in the classroom, their teaching style and assessment) that together constitute the ABL practice. Emirbayer and Mische (1998) temporal dimensions of agency served as an

analytical tool to highlight the various interpretations amongst the participants, within the *meaning* element and illuminate the dynamic nature of practice

Based on a material perspective, the role of materiality was explored in relation to maintaining, and disrupting, ABL, addressing the second sub-question. Particularly, materials such as the textbooks and the learning cards were explored in relation to how they contributed to the maintenance of ABL by managing institutional complexity and the material legitimation strategy. In relation to the disruption of ABL, this thesis elaborates on the relation between the textbook and the learning cards, and the roles each material takes within practices. By foregrounding the interconnection between these roles of material, this research indicates how these distinct roles brought about the initial maintenance of ABL in the case of Chennai, but to some extent caused the decline of ABL in the case of Puducherry. Overall, this insight highlights how materiality occupies a significant role within institutional change.

1.5. Significance of research: Contributions

My research aims to understand how practice-based institutional work contributes to the understanding of institutional change. In the empirical context, the institutional change that emerges through the shift from teacher-centred to learner-centred logic (institutional logic) and the unfolding of the change is presented through the different forms of institutional work (the practices) that contribute to creating, maintaining, and also disruption of the institution of ABL across two empirical sites: Chennai and Puducherry. Based on the empirical findings and analysis, overall my research makes three different theoretical contributions towards the facets of institutional change: how change unfolds, who is involved, and what served as crucial elements in that change.

Firstly, through the adoption of three-element practice framework, institutional change is positioned and analysed at the grass-root level, and the nature of the observed change is dynamic and ongoing. By suggesting that the enactment of practices supports the shift in institutional logics, this research not only contributes to the under-explored area of how institutional logics unfold on the ground through practitioner praxis (Zilber, 2013), but also responds to scholars' suggestions by providing a micro-foundational view of institutions (Barley, 2008). Besides the level of institutional change, by adopting the three-element practice framework, change is theorized as ongoing and dynamic, as is highlighted through the links between the elements that constitute practices conceived as being institutional work. Based on this analytical approach, this empirical work illuminates the earliest moments of change and therefore addresses a "conceptual blind spot" in relation to institutional change (Smets et al., 2017, p. 401). Overall, by adopting the practice framework, this research responds to the plea for a more complex and dynamic approach to institutional change (Micelotta et al., 2017) and also contributes to institutional scholars' interest in exploring the 'coalface' of institutions (Powell and Rerup, 2017).

Secondly, drawing on Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) temporal dimensions of agency, to interpret the variations in the shared understanding of the practice which in turn impact on the links between the

elements of practice, this research contributes to the need for a relational and collective perspective of agency (Delbridge and Edwards, 2007; Smets et al., 2017). The empirical evidence that identified these different dimensions of agency supports existing studies that have attributed dimensions of agency to categories of institutional work. Besides this, the dimensions of agency indicate the more active role of practitioners within practices, and specifically addresses the issue of an implied view of agency within this practice framework (Shove et al., 2012).

Finally, by accounting for the role of material in relation to creating institutions through different forms of practice-based institution work, this research adds to the existing evidence of the significance of material in relation to creating institutions (Katila et al., 2019; Raviola and Norbäck, 2013). By elaborating on the role of materials in managing institutional complexity and material legitimation strategies, this research attempts to extend the work of research streams that explore the different aspects of materiality in relation to the maintenance of an institution (Colombero and Boxenbaum, 2019; Jones and Massa, 2013) and illuminates the role of material within institutional logics (Jarzabkowski et al., 2013; Jones et al., 2013). As my research foregrounds the nuances of materiality through the different roles of material with the decline of an institution, it contributes to the need to account for materiality in relation to institutional disruption. Overall my research emphasizes the significance of materiality at different stages of institutional change and attempts to theorize the under-examined role of material in institutions (Jones et al., 2013; Lawrence et al., 2013).

1.6. Structure of the thesis

This thesis has seven Chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 begins by providing an overview of the institutional theory literature, which leads onto a discussion of the various approaches to institutional change, and thus positions the practice-based approach to institutional change. Institutional logics and Institutional work, the two theoretical concepts that underpin the unfolding of institutional change are then discussed. Based on the significance of the practice perspective, the next section discusses the practice theory literature and elaborates on various aspects of the three-element framework. The chapter concludes with the over-arching research questions, and sub-questions, that attempt to contribute to different aspects of institutional theory and practice literature.

Chapter 3, *Methodology*, begins by clarifying the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of the research, arguing for a qualitative case study methodology. Then, the context of the Indian school education system is presented in order to position the ABL method that is specifically discussed in the context of two cities: Chennai and Puducherry. This is followed by a discussion on the nature of fieldwork, covering various details of the exploratory study and the main study followed by a section elaborating the iterative approach to data analysis. The chapter closes with ethical practices followed by this research.

Chapter 4, *Micro-dynamics of Institutional Change* lays out the three sub-practices of ABL (teacher position, teaching style, and assessment practices) and the two supporting practices (teacher training, and monitoring practices) that contributed towards creating and maintaining [temporarily] the institution of ABL. This section actively incorporates the three-element practice framework (*meaning, material, and competence*) in order to methodically present and compare the unfolding of institutional change through these five practices across the two sites: Chennai and Puducherry. Dimensions of agency are adopted to highlight variation in meaning element and possible impact on practices. Overall, this empirical work highlights the dynamic nature of practices, and discusses how they contribute to creating and maintaining the ABL method over a period of time.

Chapter 5, *Materiality and Institutional Change* explores the maintenance and disruption of ABL from a material perspective. Based on the textbooks and the learning cards that are key teaching-learning materials associated with the traditional method and the ABL method respectively, this chapter explores how managing institutional complexity and material legitimation strategies contribute towards maintaining the ABL in both sites. The disruption of ABL is discussed by indicating how the change in the role of materials within the ABL method resulted in a different outcome in each case; Chennai and Puducherry. Therefore, the empirical work in this section confirms the significance of materiality within institutional change.

Chapter 6, the *Analysis and Discussion chapter* analyses the empirical findings of this research and discusses various contributions of my empirical work in relation to the institutional theory literature. The chapter is structured based on the two previous findings chapters and the empirical analysis along with their respective contributions are presented and discussed separately. The chapter concludes by highlighting the three broad contributions made by my thesis towards distinct facets of institutional change.

Chapter 7, the *Conclusion chapter* summarizes the findings and respective theoretical contribution developed from the empirical analysis. The limitations and theoretical reflections of this work are considered, and the Chapter and this thesis concludes by looking at future research directions, and the potential benefits of the practice perspective towards an understanding of institutional work and change.

Chapter 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In Chapter 1, I briefly presented the motivation and rationale for exploring the unfolding of institutional change by drawing on two theoretical concepts; institutional logics to understand the nature of change and institutional work to explore the process of change underpinned by the practice perspective as depicted in Figure 2.1 . Institutional logics are conceived as material practice based on assumption and values that guide behaviour (Thornton and Ocasio, 2008) and institutional change is defined in terms of change in logics. The process through which the replacement of logics is carried out is theorized through the concept of institutional work. Conceived as 'purposive action' aimed at institutional creation and transformation that is underpinned by the sociology of practice (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006), the concept of institutional work will highlight how the unfolding of institutional change occurs through purposive actions or practices carried out by individuals. A practice framework is adopted to highlight the elements that constitute institutional work and will thereby demonstrate the dynamic nature of institutional change. Therefore, as stated above, since both institutional logic and institutional work are underpinned by aspects of practice, I actively draw on a practice perspective in relation to the two theoretical concepts to highlight the dynamic and complex nature of institutional change.

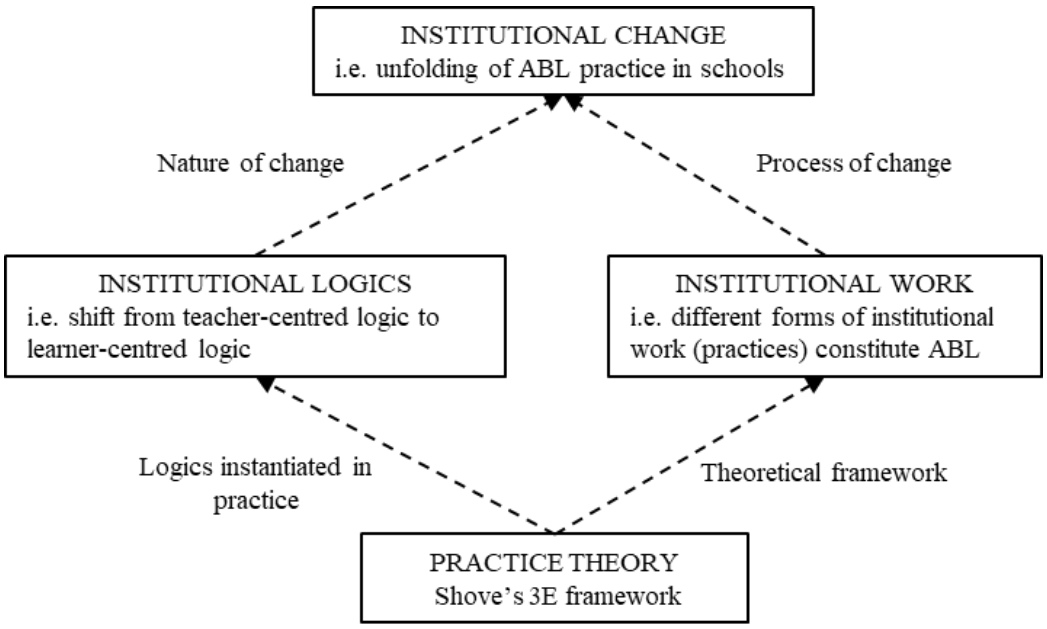

Figure 2.1: Key theoretical concepts explored in the literature review

As a result of bringing the institutional theory and practice literature together, this chapter is broadly divided into two parts. The first part introduces and discusses the three main research streams within institutional theory in relation to my thesis i.e. institutional change, institutional logics and institutional work and the second part discusses the practice literature. First, I will provide a brief overview of the institutional theory literature and key aspects of old and new institutionalism in relation to change are presented. Given that institutional theory initially focused on inertia than on change (Greenwood et al.,

2002) institutional theorists took a turn to explore aspects of change within institutional theory. Since my research focuses on the unfolding of institutional change and the elements that constitute it, I discuss the three broad pathways of change- exogenous, endogenous, and practice-based approach and focus on how the practice-based approach to institutional change is adopted in order to provide a micro-dynamic perspective to institutional change (Micelotta et al., 2017). The material dimension of institutions and institutional change is then explored in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of institutional change. Since my research draws on institutional logics and institutional work to theorize the nature and process of change, I describe how the underlying principles and material dimensions of these two concepts contribute to the unfolding of institutional change.

The second part of the literature review provides an overview of the concept of practice and its characteristics that contribute to exploring social change. The conceptualisations of practice by theorists such as Giddens, Bourdieu and Schatzki are discussed and the rationale for adopting Shove et al's (2012) three-element framework is presented. The characteristics of the elements and the links between them that contribute to the evolving nature of practice are discussed in the context of institutional change. Through the exploration of these two bodies of literature, I conclude this chapter by stating the overarching research question that aims to understand how the practice-based approach to institutional work contributes to the understanding of institutional change. This is approached through two-sub research questions with the first one focusing on how the practice framework can provide a micro-dynamic perceptive of change and the second focusing on the role of materials within the unfolding of change.

2.1. Institutional theory

Institutional theory has become a dominant perspective in the field of organisation studies as it explores how institutions impact organisational behaviour, focusing on how institutions govern action (Greenwood et al., 2008; Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). Given this theory has developed and expanded through multiple research streams, I will provide a brief overview of the evolution of institutional theory before proceeding to discuss institutional change. This section aims to highlight the trajectory of institutional theory by indicating how institutional theory that had initially focused on change in the organisation (old institutionalism) moved towards stability and inertia within the organisation (new/neo-institutionalism).

Institutional theory has been widely used in the field of economics, political science and sociology (Scott, 2001). As there are many variants of institutional theory in these respective fields, I will explore the evolution of institutional theory within the field of sociology since this research draws on the sociology of practices to explore institutional transformation. Before I go onto discuss the principle of old and new institutionalism, the concept of an institution is clarified as it carries various meanings within the literature (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006; Scott, 2001). Scott (2001, p.48) states institutions

constitute "regulative, normative and culture-cognitive elements that, together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life." This broad conceptualisation of institutions will serve to understand the evolution of institutional theory that are discussed in the next two sections. However, as mentioned in section 1.2, this stable view of institutions was challenged due to its bias towards inertia (Yang, 2003). Therefore, my research draws on a more dynamic definition of institutions in order to explore the complex nature of institutional change. I draw on Jepperson's (1991, p. 143-45) definition of institutions as "an organized established procedure that reflect a set of standardized interaction sequence" which is also adopted by Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) while developing the concept of institutional work. This dynamic and becoming nature of institutions is further discussed in section 2.4.1. As institutions impact organisations, in this context organisations are "heterogenous entities composed of functionally differentiated groups pursuing goals and promoting interest" (Greenwood and Hinings, 1996, p.1024). Institutions and organisations were first brought together in the 1940s and thereafter developed into a rich research stream with complex ideas, and various schools of thought. I will discuss the two key aspects of institutionalism i.e. the old institutionalism and new institutionalism, stating their approach to change.

2.1.1. Old institutionalism

Old institutionalism accounts for the role of individuals, their action and values in exploring change. In old intuitionalism, Weber's work gives importance to the subjective meaning the actor attributes to their actions in relation to other individuals, and therefore focuses on social action as an object of study (Weber, 1968). Weber's ideologies based on action were circulated by Parson's work on theory of action (1951; 1990) that focused on rational actors fulfilling their own goals and priorities, which thus became norms through repeated action, and formed systems (i.e. social institutions that had subjective and objective dimensions) on a larger scale once society starts to share those norms. Similar to the work of Parson on actors within institutions, Philip Selznick (1949) particularly stressed on the role of individuals and their values in institutional theory through his papers on the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) (1949) and on Leadership in Administration (1957). Scott (2001) provides a summary of these two papers of Selznick particularly in relation to the development of institutional theory within organisation studies. The author states that Selznick's work on TVA explores how the organisational structure was transformed based on the interests of individuals both within and outside the organisation (i.e. the environment). In his work on leadership, Selznick (1957) discusses the concept of institutionalisation as a process that happens to organisations over time i.e. an organisation obtains a distinctive identity as it comes to embody a particular set of values. As these organisations are institutionalised (or in other words infused with a set of values), they are transformed into institutions (Scott, 2001). The individuals work towards preserving these institutions was explicitly made by Stinchcombe (1997) in his account for the role of power and agency in preserving such interests. Selznick's work on the role of individuals in relation to their organisations, and institutions, was

instrumental in the conception of 'old institutionalism' (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). Old institutionalists focused on the impact of competing values and interests within an organisation, and on the role of interest groups diverting the organisation (Greenwood and Hinings, 1996) and therefore change within old institutionalism became based on organisational struggles with differences of values and interests (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). However, with 'new institutionalism', the nature of change is understood in terms of persistence with cultural norms and focus on the institutional environment.

2.1.2. New institutionalism

The neo-institutional approach within sociology is based on works by Durkheim (1950; 1961) and Berger and Luckmann (1967). They both focused on the meanings being constructed through human interaction and their basic underlying principles will be discussed in relation to the development of institutional theory. Durkheim (1961) focused on the symbolic system (shared cognition and schemas) that were a product of human interaction. Even though these systems are subjectively formed (through human interaction) they become 'crystallised' externally (Scott, 2001). Durkheim (1950) conceived these symbolic systems to be social facts which are phenomena perceived externally by individuals. Similarly, Berger and Luckmann (1967, p.58) argued that social reality was a product of human interaction and conceptualised institutions as symbolic systems which "are experiences ... possessing a reality of their own, a reality that confronts the individual as an external and coercive fact". Therefore, these scholars focused on the cognitive framework of institutions (in the form of culture or shared knowledge) which were external to the individuals who formed them. The work of these scholars served as the foundation for neo-institutional theory, which is discussed below.

The late 1970s marked the birth of neo-institutional theory with a focus on culture, cognition and persistence (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991) that came in contrast to Selznick's work on old institutionalism, which had examined norms, values and change. Meyer and Rowan (1977) elaborated on how institutional rules function as myths that shape organisational structure, and help them to gain legitimacy. The authors state that an organisation will seek to gain legitimacy (through conformity of rules) which is crucial for their resources and survival capabilities. For example, schools are considered to be open or natural systems (Kilgallon et al., 2008; Westbrook et al., 2013) that are influenced by their external environment. Meyer et al. (1981, p.10) explicitly stated that the social sciences portray schools as weak and ineffective organisations, as exhibited through their lack of control and of poor coordination within their technical core i.e. pedagogical practices or instructional activities. Hence, the role of the institutional environment is crucial for organisations like schools, given their conceptualisation of being an open system. Schools are considered to be institutionalised organisations as their structural framework is closely integrated to the requirements of the institutional environment. The common conception of schooling i.e. the school's structure, the roles of teachers and pupils, and that the teaching-learning practices are shaped by the shared understandings and beliefs, the cultural expectations and the taken-for-granted assumptions regarding those elements that are located in the institutional environment

(Meyer and Rowan, 1977; 1978; Meyer et al., 1981). In such circumstances, schools become loosely coupled organisations where they manage multiple goals present within the institutional environment and is further discussed in section 2.3.2.

As organisations conform to the myths, it would result in organisational homogeneity within a particular environment. This homogeneity was conceptualised as 'institutional isomorphism' by DiMaggio and Powell (1983) who developed 3 mechanisms- *coercive, mimetic* and *normative* to explain how institutional isomorphic change occurs. Coercive isomorphism result from both "formal and informal pressures" with the former exhibited as persuasion or force "exerted on organisations by other firms upon which organisations are dependent" and latter in the form of "cultural expectations in the society within which organizations function" (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, p.150). Mimetic isomorphism is force driven by the uncertainty that results in "organisations modelling themselves after similar organisations in their field that they perceive to be more legitimate or successful" (ibid, p.152). Normative isomorphism stems from professionalisation in what is referred to as "the collective struggle of members of an occupation to define the conditions and methods of their work in order to establish a cognitive base and legitimation for occupational autonomy" (ibid, p.152). Although DiMaggio and Powell (1991) state that these isomorphic forces help organisations to gain certain benefits, such as easing transactions between organisations, the gaining of prestige and reputation, or improved eligibility for contracts, they clearly state that conforming organisations are not necessarily more efficient than the non-conformists. It is important to note that these isomorphic processes dominated the understanding of institutional change, as organisations were driven towards established and legitimised institutional arrangements and practices (Delbridge and Edwards, 2008). Besides these isomorphic forces, cultural persistence was also a key aspect of the neo-institutional theory. Zucker (1977, p.28) theorised institutionalisation as a process, and the associated acts as being objective and external[5] that affect cultural persistence, working through "individual actors transmitting what is socially defined and at the same time, the meaning of the act is defined as more or less a taken for granted part of this social reality". She explores how through institutionalisation there is greater uniformity and resistance to change.

Therefore, concepts such as isomorphism and institutionalisation were used to explain organisational similarity based on institutional conditions. However, neo-institutionalism was criticised in terms of its conceptualisation of change as being ambiguous and immature since it has a strong bias towards stability and inertia (Yang, 2003). Also, the static nature of institutional theory poses concerns especially when the purpose of theory is to analyse institutions that are dynamic (Peters, 2000). With the focus on

[5] By objective, the author refers to potentially repeatable by other actors without changing the meaning and by external they refer to intersubjectively defined so that they can be viewed as a part of external reality (Zucker 1977, p.726)

conformity, the role of agency has been downplayed within neo-institutional theory (Dacin et al., 2002; DiMaggio, 1988; Hoy and Miskel, 1996). Hasselbladh and Kallinikos (2000) critiqued how institutional change is understood in terms of the adoption and diffusion of institutional ideas and arrangements by an organisation, in a rather unproblematic fashion. Scott (2001) sums up how examining institutional changes poses a problem for institutional theorists who had conceived institutions to be stable and the sources of constraints for the actors who are embedded within them. Therefore, institutional scholars began to identify that a focus on persistence and homogeneity based on a stable perception of institutions lead to a restricted view of change and thus limited the potential of institutional theory. Given this focus of neo-institutional theory, the dynamic nature of institutional arrangements[6] was not reflected within this body of work up until the late 1980s when institutional theorists sought to understand the role of individuals in institutional transformation or in other words how actions/individuals impact institutions.

2.2. Institutional change

Since the focus was on the institution itself, scholars began to explore how institutions were being transformed. Institutional change is broadly conceived as "a difference in form, quality or state overtime in an institution" (Hargrave and Van de Ven, 2006, p.866). Rather than a stable and persistent view of institutions, institutions were believed to change over time and were challenged and contested (Dacin et al., 2002). As DiMaggio (1988) called for institutional theory to provide an account for institutional change, it triggered a flurry of work. Scholars have attempted to bring coherence to this now burgeoning literature (Battilana et al., 2009; Dorado, 2005; Hargrave and Van de Ven, 2006) and have focused on different aspects of institutional change i.e. factors (agency, resource mobilisation and opportunity) that impact on institutional change; various models of institutional change (Greenwood et al., 2002; Tolbert and Zucker, 1996); and different levels (single actor or group of individuals or organisation). Within this stream of work, my research particularly focuses on the process through which institutional change unfolds in order an attempt to open the black box (the internal constituents and workings) of institutions and institutional transformation (Powell and Rerup, 2017). By exploring the elements that constitute of institutions and institutional change, I aim to foreground the role of materiality within institutional change, an element that has been ignored within institutions (De Vaujany et al., 2019).

The following sections will first discuss the various approaches to institutional change and then provide the rationale for focusing on materiality within institutional change. Recently, Micelotta et al. (2017) provided a comprehensive review of the institutional change literature, within the field of organisational institutionalism over the last twenty-five years. Based on their structure, I provide an overview of the

[6] Institutional arrangements refer to "sociocultural constructions that prescribe appropriate organisational behaviour and that shape and enforce patterns of interests and privileges" (Micelotta et al. 2017, p. 1886)

three broad approaches that exist within the institutional change literature and conclude this sub-section by stating the rationale for a practice-based approach to institutional change.

2.2.1. Approaches to institutional change

Micelotta et al. (2017) broadly classified three approaches of institutional change

1. Exogenous change
2. Endogenous change
3. Practice-based approach to change

Based on these three approaches, I will outline how these elements (exogenous factors, endogenous agency elements and change in practices) can trigger institutional change and discuss the unfolding of institutional change within them.

2.2.1.1. Exogenous change

Institutional change may be the result of exogenous shocks that happen externally to the organisation i.e. changes within the institutional environment. These shocks can take the form of macro-environmental factors such as a shift in regulatory policies (Edelman, 1992), a significant change in the political climate such as a war (Allmendinger and Hackman, 1996) or a shift in technological regimes (Garud et al., 2002) and in technologically influenced competence factors (Romanelli and Tushman, 1994). Institutional change brought about by external factors is also explored through the concept of de-institutionalisation i.e. "the process by which institutions weaken and disappear" (Scott, 2001, p.196) in which change is understood in terms of the potential scope for new institutions to be formed when the old disintegrates. Oliver (1992) identified three antecedents of de-institutionalisation i.e. *functional, political* and *social*, which can be conceptualised as exogenous drivers of institutional change. The characteristics of these antecedents and their role in various empirical studies in relation to institutional transformation are exhibited in Table 2.1

Factors	Meaning	Empirical examples
Functional	Comes into play when the instrumental value of the institutionalised practice is considered	Maguire and Hardy (2009): *functional role* of DDT (an insecticide) problematised through discourses and texts which lead to the abandonment of its use Gilmore and Sillince (2014): *performance pressure* in relation to a football club
Political	Refers to the political conditions such representation of members or innovative pressure	Kraatz and Moore (2002): political factor exhibited through a *change in leaders* of liberal arts college
Social	Refers to change in state laws, structural changes in organizations and/or societal expectations	Leblebici et al. (1991): change in *laws* governing radio spectrum that lead to change in the US radio broadcasting industry

Table 2.1: Antecedents of de-institutionalisation

Source: Adapted from (Oliver, 1992)

Such external factors that operate at organisational and/or environmental levels (Oliver, 1992), trigger a process of institutional transformation that has been explored by many scholars in terms of 'stages of institutional change' (Greenwood et al., 2002) or 'phases' of development (Tolbert and Zucker, 1996). Focusing on field level changes, Greenwood et al. (2002) develop a five-stage sequential model of institutional change that begins with external 'jolts' that destabilise established practices, and which then leads to the entry of actors who will introduce new ideas and the possibility of change. This will lead to organisations seeking viable solutions based on localised problems, which Tolbert and Zucker (1996) describe as pre-institutionalisation. In order for new ideas to go past the pre-institutionalisation phase, both Greenwood et al. (2002) and Tolbert and Zucker (1996) focused on the process of theorisation which entails specifying the existing failures of the organisation and justifying abstract solutions[7]. Thereafter, the diffusion of new practices occurs when they are objectified and gain legitimacy[8] (Suchman, 1995). Theorisation and diffusion together form the semi-institutionalisation phase in Tolbert's model and lead to the final stage of re-institutionalisation that occurs when new practices become embedded and taken for granted, an arrangement that relies on their cognitive legitimacy (Greenwood et al., 2002; Suchman, 1995). Although these models served to explain the disappearance of practices/ organisational forms, the birth and diffusion of new practices (Micelotta et al., 2017), they have a restricted perspective on change and agency.

[7] The source of the problem is publicly recognised and then developing a solution to the problem are the tasks involved in theorisation. It is also crucial to provide evidence of the success of the developed solution in some cases so that other organisations can examine it before they consider adoption (Tolbert and Zucker, 1996).

[8] Legitimacy involves in gaining social consensus for the new practices through the different forms of evidence gathering, and the monitoring outcomes of organisations that adopt those practices (Suchman, 1995)

The above models of institutional change focused on field level changes as it moves from stability to disruption and back to stability. Drawing a stable perspective of institutions, Greenwood et al. (2008) state that Tolbert and Zucker's (1996) model ignored how institutionalized arrangements can erode and be disrupted. This limitation of the theoretical model came to light during my main study fieldwork and will be highlighted in section 3.5.2. Besides this concern, these models take on a rather mechanistic and contingent approach to institutional change (Delbridge and Edwards, 2007; Van de Ven and Hargrave, 2002). As this work is also based on the 'punctuated equilibrium' model of change (Romanelli and Tushman, 1994; Tushman and Anderson, 1988), that depicts organisations being relatively stable interrupted by short bursts of fundamental change, it complements the neo-institutional approach that emphasis stability over change, which has been one of primary concerns of institutional theory. Given this perspective of change was radical and pervasive, this view of change triggered by external factors comes at the cost of ignoring the dynamic nature of regular practices and activities within the organisation that can also bring about change. This is has led to 'black-boxing' the practices (Lounsbury and Crumley, 2007) or failing to explore the origin of practice and its possible role as a source of change. In response to this, a practice approach to institutional change has been gaining momentum and is discussed in section 2.2.1.3.

In terms of the role of individual agency within models discussed above, its role has been limited to conformity to established norms and practices in the field as seen in Greenwood et al.'s (2002) study of the role of professional associations. The role of human agency was implicitly theorised as being habitual and repetitive where individuals were seen to passively adapt to the changes and therefore such models have not actively accounted for the roles of actors and agency (Delbridge and Edwards, 2008). In the 1990s there was a call to bring agency and interest within institutional studies and therefore combine old and new institutionalism (DiMaggio, 1988; Hirsch and Lounsbury, 1997). The return of agency within institutional change is explored through the concept of institutional entrepreneurship, and is discussed below.

2.2.1.2. Endogenous change: Institutional Entrepreneurs

Some aspects of institutional change have adopted an individual perspective i.e. the role of individuals and agency within the institutions. Empirical work in this field have explored how change is brought about by organisational actors (Feldman, 2000; Greenwood and Hinings, 1996; Holm, 1995). A body of literature that attempted to theorize the role of individuals and agency in institutional analysis and change was 'Institutional Entrepreneurship'. The concept of institutional entrepreneurship was introduced by DiMaggio (1988) in order to actively account for the role of individual, agency and power within institutional theory. This research stream attempted to revive aspects of 'old intuitionalism' that had focused on the role of individuals within institutional theory (Battilana et al., 2009; Selznick, 1949). Institutional entrepreneurs represent "the activities of actors who have an interest in particular institutional arrangements and who leverage resources to create new institutions or to transform [an]

existing one" (Maguire et al., 2004, p.657). Based on this conceptualisation, institutional change is brought about by institutional entrepreneurs based on the entrepreneur's skills, knowledge and ability to access the required resources (Maguire et al., 2004) and can be carried out by individuals who take on leadership roles (Beckert, 1999) or even organisations (Garud et al., 2002). The individual's social position within the organisation/institutional field can help them get access to various resources that are crucial for change. Micelotta et al. (2017) in their review of this literature, highlight how institutional entrepreneurs engage in institutional change through non-disruptive forms of cultural entrepreneurship by using bricolage (Rao et al., 2005) or theorization (Greenwood et al., 2002) and disruptive means in terms of social movements that challenge existing institutions (Hensmans, 2003).

Despite the studies (see for example Garud et al. (2002); Greenwood and Suddaby (2006); Maguire et al. (2004); Martí and Mair (2009); Tracey et al. (2011)) that have attempted to explore institutional entrepreneurship involving different actors (individuals, groups of individuals and organisations) at different levels (field, organisational and individual), little is known about the unsuccessful attempts of institutional change carried out by entrepreneurs (Micelotta et al., 2017). In addition, this theoretical body has been criticised for its portrayal of institutional entrepreneurs as *"*heroes" and as dis-embedded actors of the organisation (Meyer, 2006, p.732)*,* suggesting that the detachment of these actors, being in a dominant position over others, is crucial in order to bring about institutional change. Besides the significance of social position that gives the individual power and access to resources, they seem to display rather high levels of agency, purposefully downplaying their institutional embeddedness (Lawrence et al., 2009a). Therefore, institutional entrepreneurs have been criticised for being a "dexus ex machina" focusing on the actions of few powerful actors in order to explain institutional change (Delmestri, 2006, p. 1536-37). Even though there are attempts to address these shortcomings by conceptualizing various enabling conditions such the actor's social position (individual level) or their environment (field-level characteristics) that can support entrepreneurial activities and address the paradox of embedded agency i.e. how embedded institutional actors can bring about change (Battilana et al., 2009), the field in relation to institutional change has moved on. Rather than exploring institutional change in terms of external structural based factors that characterizes change mechanically or in terms of this individual and voluntaristic initiatives that characterize change dramatically, there has been a shift towards practice-based approaches in attempts to develop a richer and dynamic approach to institutional change (Micelotta et al., 2017).

2.2.1.3. Practice-based change

Moving away from this structural or agentic approach to institutional change, scholars have sought to attain a complex view of institutional change by focusing on the micro-perspective of institutions (Barley, 2008; Harmon et al., 2018). Micro-perspective in this research refers to the practices that reflect and impact institutional change. Practices refer to sayings and doings that constitutes of different elements such as things, knowledge and skills (Reckwitz, 2002). It is important to note that this micro

perspective is not equal to a micro-foundational approach, which may be considered as a fundamental element that constitutes other larger components (Smets et al., 2017). Rather, this micro-perspective adopts a relational approach i.e. the focus is on the different practices that stretch horizontally rather hierarchically, or in a top-down ontology seen in institutional theory (Schatzki et al., 2001; Smets et al., 2017). By adopting this practice-based ontology, the becoming of institutions and therefore institutional change occurs through the enactments of different practices. Within this approach, different scholars have highlighted how practices trigger a bottom-up institutional change that has field-level impact (refer to Lounsbury and Crumley (2007); Smets et al. (2012); Delmestri and Greenwood (2016); Leung et al. (2014)). Studies have located the trigger for institutional change in practices (Bridwell-Mitchell, 2016; Reay et al., 2013) as practitioners engage in their daily activities "as they struggle to accomplish their work" (Smets et al., 2012, p.877). This is in contrast to being located among exogenous environmental factors, or in the efforts of institutional entrepreneurs. Therefore, the institutional change takes on a grassroot perspective, as change can emerge through the daily activities of individuals (Smets and Jarzabkowski, 2013).

My research draws on this practice-based approach to institutional change but with a focus on the unfolding of institutional change instead of practices being a trigger to bottom-up change. With a dominant practice lens, as highlighted on pg.10, I draw upon two theoretical concepts from the institutional theory literature that have a practice foundation and the rationale for this choice is presented in the respective subsequent sections. First is institutional logics that refers to 'material practices' which serve as the 'rules of the game' in order to guide individual behaviour (Thornton and Ocasio, 1999; Thornton et al., 2012). Second is institutional work, that refers to the different forms of action that lead to institutional transformation (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). By drawing on an institutional logic perspective, a practice-based approach will help integrate the institutional aspect (logics) within a micro-perspective (practices) i.e. logics will be instantiated within practices and underpin the nature of institutional change that occurs through a shift in logics. The process of replacement or change of this institutional logic is theorized through the concept of institutional work to understand why and how certain practices of the practitioner can bring about institutional transformation (process of institutional change).

In the section above, I discussed the exogenous and endogenous approaches to institutional change and highlighted how the mechanical approach of the former and the voluntaristic nature of the latter fail to capture the complex and dynamic approach to institutional change. In response, my research draws on a practice-based approach to change underpinned by the concept of institutional logic and institutional work to highlight the complexity of institutional change. Before elaborating on the two concepts, I will first present the rationale for exploring the material dimension within institutional change.

2.2.2. Materials and institutional change

Institutional scholars have predominantly focused on the cognitive and cultural aspects of institutional creation and transformation (DiMaggio, 1997; Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006), with overall primacy given to verbal language (written and vocal signs) and therefore underestimated the role material and visual basis of institutions (De Vaujany et al., 2019; Jones and Massa, 2013; Jones et al., 2017). Materials objects not only embody cognitive and cultural ideas of institutions (Jones et al., 2017) but also carry within them the ability to change these aspects of institutions since "objects acquire different meanings depending on the context in which they are deployed" (Patriotta et al., 2011, p.1831). Therefore, the malleability of meanings in relation to objects can play a crucial role in institutional transformation particularly since institutional change involves transformation not only of cognitive symbols/ signs but also materials (Friedland and Alford, 1991). Pinch (2008, p.466) who stressed on the "inescapable material dimension" of institutions argued that institutional theorists need to account for materiality with institutions, which he describes as the world of things and objects (that accounts for technical things) and recognise the importance of material involvement in institutional change.

Despite the significance of the material dimension within institutions being acknowledged, it remains an under-examined issue within institutional theory literature (Lawrence et al., 2013; Thornton et al., 2012). Institutional scholars have only recently begun to investigate the role of materiality with institutional phenomena particularly within two research streams in institutional literature: institutional logics (Jones and Massa, 2013) and institutional work (De Vaujany et al., 2019). Key empirical studies and gaps with respect to materiality within these streams are subsequently discussed in section 2.3.3 and 2.4.4. As my research adopts a practice lens, in relation to institutional change it explores how practices are material enactments of institutional logics (Sahlin and Wedlin, 2008) and aims to highlight their role in the shift of institutional logics that contributes to the nature of institutional change. In relation to institutional work, I foreground the role of material within forms of institutional work and highlight the nuances of materiality particularly in relation to the disruption of institutions. In my research, the term material refers to material objects or artefacts and are used interchangeably.

As my research aims to underscore the role of materials within institutional change by highlighting the significance of materiality in institutional work and institutional logics literature, this is strengthened by drawing on aspects of legitimacy and authentication of material in relation to institutional change. As indicated in section 2.1.2 legitimacy was a key concept in neo-institutionalism and Berger and Luckmann (1967) stress that legitimation is a process through which institutions are explained and justified. This is particularly crucial at times of creating new institutions as legitimacy attempts to establish the appropriateness of institutional order. With particular reference to material, Jones et al. (2017) provide examples of 3 material legitimation strategies that support Suchman (1995) various forms of legitimacy and is exhibited in Table 2.2.

Material legitimation strategies	Certification contests	Material Mimicry	Camouflage
Meaning (Jones et al., 2017)	"Authenticates verbal or written claims that correspond to material realities" that highlight superior performance of materials (p.12)	Legitimates network of people, practices and object to stabilizes understanding	Aims to "assimilate the new into the familiar" in order to enhance comprehension (p.13)
Forms of Legitimacy (Suchman, 1995)	Pragmatic legitimacy: based on the usefulness of the material	Normative legitimacy: needs to resemble accepted norms and values	Cognitive legitimacy: Normalisation through assimilation established symbolic system
Empirical example	Exhibiting superiority of cars through speed in comparison to carts and horses (Rao, 1994)	Film entrepreneurs attempt to imitate Broadway Theatre's actors (people), posh theatres and red carpets (material) to change the normative understanding of the industry from illegitimate to legitimate (Jones, 2001)	In the early electricity industry, Hargadon and Douglas (2001) refers to how Edison camouflaged his electric bulb into forms of the gas lamp (shape of the bulb as flickering light)

Table 2.2: Characteristics of material legitimation strategies

Source: Adapted from Jones et al. (2017)

These material legitimation strategies will be explored along the lines of maintaining institutions and further theorized by linking them to forms of authentication. In my research authentication is a relational process through which objects or artefacts are established to be authentic (Askin and Mol, 2018). That is to say, authenticity of materials are 'socially produced and ascribed' (Askin and Mol, 2018, p.164) in the sense that "authenticity is a claim that is made by or for someone, thing, or performance and either accepted or rejected by relevant others" (Peterson, 2005, p.1086). These social interactions between individuals that produce authentication of material are shaped by broad institutions through various markers such as social categories (Askin and Mol, 2018; Colombero and Boxenbaum, 2019). I attempt to explore how the various material legitimation strategies may be supported and strengthened through institutionally shaped forms of authentication. Although the literature has established the various forms of authenticity (Carroll, 2015; Carroll and Wheaton, 2009), I specifically adopt Lehman et al. (2019, p.5-6) perspectives on authenticity in order to highlight how authenticity is institutionally shaped. In his review, Lehman and his co-authors outline how authenticity emerges as a form of *consistency, conformity* and *connection* and its features are highlighted in Table 2.3.

Perspectives of Authenticity	Consistency	Conformity	Connection
Meaning *(Lehman et al., 2019, p.6)*	An entity is authentic to the extent that "it is consistent in terms of its external expressions and it's internal values and beliefs"	An entity is authentic to the extent that it "conforms to the social category to which it has been assigned or that it has claimed for itself."	An entity is authentic to the extent that it is "connected to a particular person, place, or time as claimed"
Resembling forms of authenticity identified by (Carroll, 2015)	Moral authenticity	Type and craft authenticity	Idiosyncratic authenticity
Empirical examples	Authenticity judged based on the extent to which organisations embody organisational values (internal aspect) depicted through organisational actions (external aspect) production process (Carroll and Swaminathan, 2000) or advertising campaigns (Moeran, 2005)	Producers of country music gained authenticity by exhibiting how it reproduced features of exemplar country music by Hank Williams (Peterson, 1997; 2005)	Objects such as a vintage automobile may be deemed authentic if it possesses the vehicle's original qualities (Leigh et al., 2006)

Table 2.3: Three forms of authenticity

Source: Adapted from Lehman et al. (2019)

Authenticity, an attribution made by individuals to materials may occupy a significant role in the unfolding of institutional change. Overall this section discussed how exploring the material aspect of institutional transformation provides a comprehensive understanding of change. In particular, my research attempts to link the various forms of authentication with material legitimation strategies in order to strengthen the impact of the latter on institutional transformation. Having provided the rationale for exploring the unfolding of institutional through practices and highlighting the role of material within institutional change, I will now proceed to discuss the first theoretical concept in relation to change: institutional logics.

2.3. Institutional logics

As stated on pg. 10, I draw on the concept of institutional logics to define the nature of institutional change and highlight how logics unfold through material practices. In order to highlight the practice and material dimension within institutional logics, this section briefly explains the origin and the underlying principles of institutional logics, and particularly highlights the different studies that have examined the role of institutional logics and complexity in relation to institutional change. The link between the institutional logics and institutional work is briefly mentioned through different empirical works, and this section concludes with the significance of the material dimension of institutional logics in relation to institutional change.

2.3.1. Origin and underlying principles

Thornton and Ocasio (1999, p.804) define an institutional logic as a "socially constructed, historical pattern of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organise time and space and provide meaning to their social reality.*"* Based on this definition, institutional logic not only provides meaning for institutions but also provides a link between meaning (i.e. belief and values) and social reality that exists in the form of practices. This is achieved as the logics serve as a cognitive framework that provides the 'rules of the game' (Thornton and Ocasio, 1999) that help individuals cope with ambiguity and guide them in terms of appropriate behaviour.

The concept of institutional logics was first introduced by Friedland and Alford (1991) as they critiqued neo-institutional theory for not accounting for the role of individuals. They particularly emphasised the need to examine how individuals work through contradictions that arise due to the presence of different levels of societal institutions, such as family, government, religion, and state markets. The authors indicated that such institutions are supra-organisational patterns of activity operating at different levels of analysis (individual, organisation and society) and believed that individuals can re-interpret and manipulate the institutions. Institutional logics not only help individuals to make sense of the reality, but they also guide action and therefore can constrain and/or enable the potential agency of individuals. Hence, institutional logics are embodied in the practices, and guide the enactment of those practices. Given that there are multiple institutions operating within the organisation, it leads to a situation where there are multiple logics which might clash i.e. institutional contradictions, when faced with an incompatibility of logic it provides the moment for potential change (Greenwood et al., 2008).

Lounsbury and Boxenbaum (2013) advocate that institutional logic which was rooted in the work of Friedland and Alford (1991) was theoretically and empirically refined in different contexts through the work of Townley (1997) in public universities, Haveman and Rao (1997) in thrift banks, and Thornton and Ocasio (1999) in higher education publishing. All three empirical works highlight the role of institutional logics in bringing about change, particularly how institutional contradictions appeared when the new logic introduced clashed with the existing ones (Thornton and Ocasio, 1999; Townley, 1997). However, the change in institutional logics occurred at different levels i.e. Haveman and Rao (1997) focused on the emergence of progressivism, a change in societal level logic which impacts on organisations; whereas Thornton and Ocasio (1999) examined change in logics at an industry level i.e. highlighting the shift from an editorial logic to a market logic in the higher education publishing industry. These works come in contrast to Friedland and Alford (1991), who focused on the impact of societal level institutional logics (for example the family, or religion) on organisations and on individuals. However, recent research has focused in terms of institutional logics and clashes of logic

(i.e. contradictions) at an organisational field level[9] (Greenwood et al., 2011; Lounsbury, 2007; Purdy and Gray, 2009; Reay and Hinings, 2009). Thereafter, Thornton et al. (2012) in their book *The Introduction of Logic perspectives* provided a sophisticated conceptualisation of institutional logics, and developed its theoretical underpinnings by emphasising the importance of the institutional logic as a concept that governs the interpretation and understanding of individuals, and of a collective of individuals within a sector. The function of institutional logic has been explored in different empirical contexts or settings, such as within professional service (Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005), healthcare (Nigam and Ocasio, 2010), mutual funds (Lounsbury, 2002) and colleges and universities (Gumport, 2000). The underlying principles of this concept are now briefly described.

Thornton et al. (2012, p.7) proposed four[10] foundational principles in order to develop a meta-theory of institutional logics: "duality of structure and agency, institutions as material and symbolic, institutions as historically contingent and institutions as multiple level of analysis". Rather than given primacy to structure or action, the institutional logics perspective assumes interests and assumptions of individuals are embedded within the prevailing logic (Thornton and Ocasio, 2008). That is to say, outcomes are a result of the interplay between structure and agency that can be conceived as practices since institutional logics are considered as material practices. This leads onto the next key principle of logics that accounts for the materiality and symbolic aspects of institutions. Thornton et al. (2012, p.11-12) that refer to material aspects as "structures and practices" and symbolic aspects as "ideation and meaning" also state that they are intertwined, and thus constitutive of each other. Institutional change emerges through the interplay of both these forces since creation of institution occur when shared meanings (symbolic aspect) are enacted through practices (material aspects). Therefore, in relation to my research, institutional logics are considered as "conceptual segue" between institutional and practice theories (Smets et al., 2017, p.398) and is an appropriate theoretical concept to explore the unfolding of institutional change through a practice approach. In line with the practice dimension of this concept, I draw on Micelotta et al's (2017, p.1891) define institutional change as the "replacement of one dominant logic over another" to highlight how logics are instantiated within individual practices which complements my 'micro' level analysis of institutional change.

However, the material dimension of logics has been conceptualised as practice or structure instead of focusing of tangible, physical materials (Jones et al., 2013) and has received limited attention within

[9] The organisational field is here referred to as "those organizations that, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life: key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies, and other organizations that produce similar services or product" (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, p.148)

[10] Thornton and Ocasio (2008) initially included an additional fifth principle of "society as an inter-institutional system" in order to theorize agency and sources of heterogeneity as each sector represents a different set of expectations and human behaviour. It supports the fourth principle of institutions operating at multiple levels of analysis

institutional logics literature (De Vaujany et al., 2019). This is elaborated in section 2.3.3. The third principle of institutions being historically contingent is crucial for the understanding of institutional change and transformation as it accounts for how institutional environment forces such as political, economic or social factors impact individual and organisational behaviour (Thornton and Ocasio, 2008). Lastly, as institutional logic perspective assumes that institutions can operate at different levels-individual, organisational, field and societal level, it supports the micro-perspective approach to institutional change adopted within this research that aims to explore the unfolding of institutional change through practices performed at grassroot level.

Overall, the foundational principles of institutional logics support a practice-based approach to institutional change adopted within this research. Particularly, the practice and materiality underpinning of this theoretical concept justifies exploring institutional change (nature of change) in terms of replacement institutional logics. The next section discusses how the concept of institutional logic contributes to examining institutional change.

2.3.2. Role of institutional logic and institutional complexity in institutional change

As institutional logics provide a guideline for practical action (Rao et al., 2003) many studies have explored how it shapes organisational action and response in terms of changes in institutional logic i.e. institutional change. Various empirical studies have examined how institutional change through replacement of logics occur at industry level (Thornton et al., 2005; Thornton and Ocasio, 1999), field-level (Marquis and Lounsbury, 2007; Nigam and Ocasio, 2010) and organisation level (Tracey et al., 2011). Although these scholarly works provide an overview of how institutional change occurs as they move from one dominant logic to another, it resembles a rather mechanistic view of change ignoring the complexity involved in the transition of logics (Greenwood et al., 2011). Also, since organisations encounter multiple logics that may or may not be compatible (Friedland and Alford, 1991; Greenwood et al., 2011; Kraatz and Block, 2008), institutional scholars have recently drawn on practice perspective to attain a more granular understanding of how logics that are instantiated in daily practices of practitioners bring about institutional change and manage institutional complexity. Institutional complexity is a situation when organisations are confronted with "incompatible prescriptions from multiple institutional logics" (Greenwood et al., 2011, p.318) and is common amongst various organisations.

Organisations situated in an institutional environment are subject to different regulatory requirements, receive multiple normative orders, and may also house differing forms of cultural logic (Kraatz and Block, 2008). For instance, hospitals as organisations are influenced by various societal level logics such professional logics of medical care, market logic and democratic state logic (Scott et al., 2000; Thornton and Ocasio, 2008). Like hospitals that are influenced by the institutional environment through the operation of different logics, schools as organisations are embedded in the organisational field and

institutional environment that includes different organisations, such as textbook publishers, trades unions, curriculum boards, and teacher training institutes (Meyer, 2006; Rowan and Miskel, 1999). In terms of institutional logics, schools may be influenced by different logics, such as market logic (Davies and Quirke, 2007), that makes schools more competitive and keen to display quality indicators; adapt to logics based from different stakeholders including parents and teachers (Greenwood et al., 2011; Russell, 2011). Schools are therefore archetypal organisations that have multiple logics in operation, a situation which can lead to complexity.

The literature on how organisations respond to such complexity has predominantly been structural (Greenwood et al., 2011; Kraatz and Block, 2008) i.e. organisations adopt different strategies ranging from avoidance to acquiescence (Pache and Santos, 2010), they manage complexity through collaborations and by maintaining separate identities (Reay and Hinings, 2009) or through de-coupling where the technical core of an organisation is protected and symbolic conformity to a chosen logic is exhibited (Aurini, 2006). However, these approaches take on a static/permanent perspective when managing institutional complexity based on a binary perspective of institutional logics i.e. logics are either compatible or incompatible. Such an approach fails to account for the dynamic nature of institutional logics and complexity. Tilcsik (2010) in his empirical case study of post-Communist government agency, suggests that organisational responses may change over time, supporting the need to explore how individuals act within the organisation, in relation to their personal responses. In contrast to this static-structural perspective on organisational responses for managing institutional complexity, responding to the calls to analyse the 'coalface' of institutions (Barley, 2008), few scholars such as Pache and Santos (2013), Rao et al. (2003) and Smets et al. (2012) have adopted a practical, dynamic approach to managing complexity particularly through combining institutional logics.

For instance, Rao et al. (2003) in their study regarding identity movement in Nouvelle French cuisine, state how identity movements resulted in a bottom-up change in logics (i.e. institutional change), indicating that change can emerge through the practices of individuals embedded within the institutions. When faced with contradictions, individuals engage in identity work (a form of institutional work) in order to manage and transform the respective institutional logics (Creed et al., 2010; Lok, 2010; Meyer and Hammerschmid, 2006; Reay and Hinings, 2009) Besides identity work, which is focused on an individual level of analysis, organisations engage in different forms of work such as institutional work in terms of bricolage (Pache and Santos, 2013), negotiation work (Helfen and Sydow, 2013) and legitimation work (Patriotta et al., 2011) in order to bring shift in logics and manage institutional complexity. Smets and his co-authors, adopt a practice lens not only to situate institutional change in locus of everyday activities as individuals aim to “get the job done” (Smets et al., 2012, p.880), but also this perspective helps individuals manage institutional complexity (Smets and Jarzabkowski, 2013; Smets et al., 2015) by engaging in different forms of institutional work. With reference to institutional complexity, Smets and his colleagues (2013; 2015) suggest that a practice lens will delve deeper into

dynamic of this complexity by suggesting that complexity is constructed rather than encounters by the individual. This practice lens gives an alternative perspective on the origin of change and on the unfolding nature of change, attempting to capture the earliest moment of change in the situated improvement of performance of a practice (Smets et al., 2017) as individuals draw on different interpretations or institutional logics and experience the phenomena (Orlikowski, 2002). However, these studies fall short in terms of comprehensively engaging with the concept of practice as they do not explore the elements that constitute practice and how that contribute to managing complexity. For instance, these studies are silent in terms of the role of materiality within change.

Overall, exploring the change in institutional logics and management of institutional complexity through forms of institutional work provide an opportunity to shed light on how institutional logics operate within the practices of individuals i.e. meanings and interpretation are constructed through enactment of practice, as individuals work to towards the creation, maintenance and disruption of institutions (i.e. institutional work) and thereby provide a more complex and balanced view of the institutional processes (Zilber, 2013, p.90). In addition, this research will also highlight the material dimension within logics in relation to institutional change. This is discussed below.

2.3.3. Material aspect of institutional logics

Another key aspect of the practice perspective is that practices are material enactments of institutional logics (Sahlin and Wedlin, 2008; Smets et al., 2012). Although institutional logics are defined as 'material practices' (Thornton and Ocasio, 2008) and manifest in through a combination of practice, subjects (individual) and objects (Friedland, 2018), the empirical studies that explore the material aspects of institutional logics is limited in number. Since institutional logics are also composed of material aspects (structure and practices) as much as symbolic elements (ideation and meaning), the physical object aspect of the former dimension (i.e. the material aspect within practices) has been overlooked (Jones et al., 2013). For instance, Thornton and Ocasio (1999) in their study of the shift in logics (from an editorial to a market logic) of the higher educational publishing industry, focused on the skills of the CEO (i.e. the qualifying characteristics of a CEO as an editor-in-chief or as an MBA) that are guided by distinct logics but remain silent on the content of the books published when there was a shift in this logic. Similarly, Oakes et al. (1998) show how the introduction of business planning brings a shift in the original cultural logic (of preserving artefacts) to a more economic logic (of generating revenues) in museums in Alberta and mentions how managers can improve exhibits to make them more appealing to visitors. However, these researchers do not explicitly analyse how materials are directly related to the change in logic i.e. were new artefacts acquired as part of the economic logic of revenue generation? Therefore, there is a lack of clarity about the role of the material aspect in this work. However, a few scholars have mentioned specific material practices in their empirical studies. In terms of the identity movement within French cuisine, Rao et al. (2003) describe how the ingredients of specific dishes, and the rules for organising food, reflect a new identity for the chef, suggesting that

material changes relate to identity work and also supported the shift in logic. Overall, there is need to explore the role of materials in relation to maintaining or changing institutional logics (De Vaujany et al., 2019) and particularly "the impact of materials on instantiation of different logics" (Jarzabkowski et al., 2013, p.55). This research responds to these gaps by exploring how material that represent the institutional logics bring about institutional change (shift in logics) through enactment of practices. Such an approach will foreground the material dimension not only within in institutional logics but also institutional change.

2.3.4. Summary

Since institutional change has previously been defined in terms of change from one dominant logic to another, the concepts of institutional logics and institutional change are tightly connected. Some scholars have explored institutional change in terms of an underlying shift or change in logics (Lounsbury, 2002; Reay and Hinings, 2009; Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005). Particularly by adopting a practice-based approach to institutional change, the logics are instantiated within the practices of the individual, and will contribute to the theoretical gap in terms of how institutional logics are employed by the individual in their experience of the phenomena (Zilber, 2013) explored through practices. Particularly, this is achieved by actively accounting for material objects that can be "carrier of and mechanisms by which logics are sustained and transformed over time" (Jones et al., 2017, p.20) within those practices. As the role of institutional logics in contributing to the cognitive framework and material aspects of institutional change has been explored, I will now explore how the second theoretical concept- institutional work can contribute to institutional change.

2.4. Institutional work

This section elaborates on the concept of institutional work and discusses how its foundational pillars- the concept of agency and the sociology of practice justify how the practice-based approach to institutional work can serve as a valid theoretical concept to explore institutional change. Although empirical studies have explored institutional work in terms of practices, they fall short of examining the components of these practices and is discussed below. The role of materials within the institutional work stream is presented and the section concludes stating how key concepts of institutional work in terms of effort and intentionality can contribute to the understanding of institutional change

2.4.1. Concept of institutional work

Institutional work was introduced as a concept to re-direct attention from institutions (or structure per se) to the actions of the individuals by whom they are sustained. Lawrence and Suddaby (2006, p.215) who conceptualised the term, refer to institutional work as "the purposive action of individuals and organizations aimed at creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions*".* In order to bring coherence to the literature on institutional entrepreneurship, de-institutionalization, the authors identified various

practices that resembled forms of institutional work which they organized into three broad categories of institutional work- "creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions" (ibid, p. 220).

Institutions in this context are conceived differently by comparison with those discussed under traditional and neo-institutional theory. In this context, an institution is considered as "a social order or patterns (standardised interaction sequences) that have attained a certain state or property" (Jepperson, 1991, p.145). This description of an institution comes in contrast to the neo-institutional view of an institution, that focuses on human cognition and regulation i.e. Scott's (2001) definition of regulatory, normative and cultural cognitive elements. This conceptualisation of institutions as products of patterns of activity or action is also rooted in Berger and Luckmann's (1967) work that inspired neo-institutionalism who stated that although institutions "control human conduct by setting up predefined patterns of conduct" (p.72) they go onto acknowledged how the phenomena of institutions "is a humanly produced, constructed objectivity" (p.79). By drawing on this view of institutions developed by Berger and Luckmann (1967), Willmott (2010) states that it elucidates how institutional work of individuals establishes, maintains or disrupts the institution.

Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) developed the concept of institutional work-based two key pieces of literature. First, by drawing on the concept of agency, they highlight how actions of individuals impact institutions. Second, the authors develop a practice approach in order to provide a "more robust theoretical foundation for the concept of institutional work" (ibid, p. 216). These two aspects that serve as foundational pillars will be elaborated in the next section. Based on these two pillars- agency and practice perspective, institutional work essentially seeks to understand the impact of individual's action on institutions and research based on institutional work revolves around three key elements (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006, p.219-220; Lawrence et al., 2009a)

1. Highlights "the awareness, skills and reflexivity of individual and collective actors"
2. Provides "an understanding of institutions as constituted in the more or less conscious action of individual and collective actors" and
3. Suggests an approach in which "we cannot step outside of action as practice- even action which is aimed at changing the institutional order of an organizational field occurs within a set of institutionalized rules"

My research adopts these three elements of institutional work supported by a practice-based theoretical framework. By adopting a dominant practice lens, my research focuses on the becoming nature of institutions through various sets of practices that individuals engage in. Shove et al's (2012) three-element practice framework (meaning, material and competence) not only highlights the skills of the actors engaged in institutional work through the element of competence but is also supportive of how change occurs within the practices that are exhibited through evolving nature of links between the

elements that constitute the practice. This will be clarified and discussed in the section on practice literature. I will now proceed to discuss the two pillars of institutional work: the concept of agency and practice perspective.

2.4.2. Foundations of institutional Work

The concept of agency

Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) state that this theoretical foundation of institutional work was initially built on work done by DiMaggio (1988) who focused on accounting for the impact of individuals and agency on institutions by establishing the concept of Institutional entrepreneurs, and then on two papers by Oliver that discussed the antecedents to de-institutionalisation (1992) and the responses of organizations to institutional pressure (1991). Although these papers attempt to bring back a more active role of individuals within institutional theory, they bring about their own issues and problems (as discussed in section 2.2.1.2). As noted in that section, the paradox of embedded agency is a central issue with regard to institutional change i.e. how does an individual exercise agency and transform the institution (or structure) that enables or constrains their actions. Moving away from a uni-dimensional approach to agency, which is either conceptualised through the "heroic" dimension of the institutional entrepreneur (Maguire et al., 2004) (active agency) or is determined through the external institutional environment (passive agency) i.e. "cultural dopes" in neo-institutional theory (Meyer et al., 1981), Battilana and Aunno (2009) theorised a multi-dimensional view of agency as being able to account for the dynamic nature of agency that can change, based on time and the individual context. Agency in this context is defined: "as the temporally constructed engagement by actors of different structural environments—the temporal relational contexts of action—which, through the interplay of habit, imagination, and judgment, both reproduces and transforms those structures in interactive response to the problems posed by changing historical situations" (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998, p.970).

Based on this definition, agency or social engagement is oriented towards the past, present or future highlighting how agency can change based on time. Drawing on this temporal perspective, Emirbayer and Mische (1998) developed the three constitute elements of agency as being iteration, projectivity and practical evaluation. The authors clearly state that although these dimensions of agency are analytically distinct, all three forms of agency are found in varying degrees within any instance of empirical action and described them as a 'chordal triad of agency' (ibid, p. 971) in the sense that action may be more or less engaged with the past, directed to the future or responsive to present. These analytically distinct dimensions of agency help situate the stability and change in social actions (Hays, 1994). Besides serving a tool to interpret behaviour or action, these dimensions of agency can also serve to interpret thought or interpretations of individual. Alongside its temporal aspect, agency is in relation to something, be it a person, a meaning, or an event (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998) and is therefore social and relational to meaning. In my research, I draw on this internal perspective of agency as an analytical tool for understanding how individuals draw on different interpretations or meanings in

relation to their institutional work. With reference to Shove et al's (2012) three-element practice framework, agency is therefore in relation to meaning element of the practice and that meaning is in relation to the other two elements, the competence and the material that form the basis of the practice. These practices constitute the purposive actions; institutional work. Therefore, the dimension of agency serves as an analytical tool to explore the role of agency within multiple interpretations of practice and its implications, in relation to the emergence, maintenance and disruption of practice or institutional work and therefore institutions.

Iterational dimension of agency

Iteration is a form of agency related to the past and is considered as "the selective reactivation by actors of past patterns of thought and action, as routinely incorporated in practical activity, thereby giving stability and order to social universes and helping to sustain identities, interactions, and institutions over time" (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998, p.971). Within this dimension, the authors explore the influence of past patterns, habits, routines or rituals in relation to meaning, through the process of "schematisation" within which individuals recall these patterns and habits (schemas- cognitive patterns relating to interpretations) that they had developed through previous social experiences. Schematisation being the locus of agency explores how individuals implement or use these schemas within their experience. Being taken-for-granted habits, iterational agency may suggest mindless reproduction and low reflexivity of the individual, however much it requires work and effort. This is true in the case of institutional stability and maintenance where habits and routines make an organisation relatively stable, and build resistance to change in the practices within them (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991; Meyer and Rowan, 1977). Empirical works have indicated that the presence of an iterational dimension of agency serves as resistance to change, or as inertia, as individuals draws on past habits and routines for stability and reliability (Bridwell-Mitchell, 2016; Dalpiaz et al., 2016).

Projective dimension of agency

Projectivity is the second dimension of agency which is concerned with future engagements. It accounts for "the imaginative generation by actors of possible future trajectories of action, in which received structures of thought and action may be creatively reconfigured in relation to actors' hopes, fears, and desires for the future" (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998, p.971). A creative dimension of agency, projectivity focuses on how actors engage with future possibilities in response to the challenges and uncertainties faced in their social life. Projectivity therefore mediates between where they have been in the past, what they are facing at the moment, and where they'd like to be in future. When faced with uncertainties, individuals are capable of being reflexive, and of distancing themselves from their routines and past habits, a thoughtful activity which gives them an opportunity to innovate responses for the future. Individuals do so by reconfiguring the schema in line with the goals and objectives that need to be achieved. Emirbayer and Mische (1998, p.984) conceptualised this as the "hypothesization

of social experience" which they refer to when "actors attempt to reconfigure received schemas by generating alternative possible responses to the problematic situations they confront in their life." In case of institutional theory, this creative-futuristic form of agency is predominant within the work of institutional entrepreneurs who work towards finding alternative solutions when faced with uncertainties, alternatives that result in creating new institutions (Battilana and Aunno, 2009; Dorado, 2005).

Practical-evaluative dimension of agency

The last dimension of agency is related to the present i.e. practical evaluation. It refers to "the capacity of actors to make practical and normative judgements among alternative possible trajectories of action, in response to the emerging demands, dilemmas, and ambiguities of presently evolving situations" (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998, p.975). This form of agency responds to the requirements of the present. Habits and routines of the past, as well as future possibilities, must be altered to suit the demands of the present moment. The actor will likely engage in reflective work to assess the alternatives available in the current situation and will be required to make a choice. This dimension of agency is displayed through the *contextualisation* of social experience that entails many different forms of cognitive, normative and cultural judgements which are theorised in the form of problematization, decision, and execution (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). These are seen in relation to past patterns through characterisation and future prospects, through a process of deliberation.

Most analyses of agency, in the institutional studies of organisations, focus on a projective agency that leads to the creation of new institutions, and at times disrupts institutions (Beckert, 1999; DiMaggio, 1988; Maguire et al., 2004), and on the iterative dimension of agency that focuses on habitual and routinised activity (Dalpiaz et al., 2016; Mutch et al., 2006). Therefore, the practical evaluative agency has received far less attention in the discussion of institutional work (Battilana and Aunno, 2009; Smets and Jarzabkowski, 2013). This research draws on these dimensions of agency as an analytical tool to highlight variation in interpretations in relation to institutional work, taking on a relational and internal view of agency. The implications of these forms of agency are discussed in terms of creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions and are discussed in section 6.3.2.

Practice approach

The second foundation for institutional work is the based on the tradition of the sociology of practice (Bourdieu, 1977; Giddens, 1984) that attempt to understand social phenomena and change through practices. Their work is discussed in detail in section 2.5.2 within the practice literature. As practices are considered as materially arrays of human activity (Schatzki et al., 2001, p.2) serving as mechanism through which individual respond to demand social life, Lawrence and Suddaby (2006, p.219) based on a practice perspective view "institutional work as intelligent, situated institutional action" i.e. practices,

carried out by creative and knowledgeable individuals who engage in "work to create, maintain and disrupt institutions." This practice-based approach to action takes on a more granular 'micro' perspective of change in comparison with the process-based approach (i.e. institutionalization models developed by Tolbert and Zucker (1996) and Greenwood and Hinings (1996)) that focuses on sequences of events that lead to change taking on a 'mechanistic and contingent' approach to institutional change (Delbridge and Edwards, 2008). Therefore, by focusing on the "internal life of the process" (Brown and Duguid, 2000, p.95) of institutional processes it provides a micro-dynamic perspective of institutional change. The next section highlights various empirical work that has adopted this institutional work perspective in relation to change.

2.4.3. Empirical studies in institutional work: practice perspective

As the foundation of institutional work is built on the tenants of agency and sociology of practice, empirical studies have explored how individual actors or practitioners engage in different practices that drive various institutional processes. Table 2.4 highlights the various empirical work that has broadly drawn on practice perspective in exploring forms of institutional work to bring about institutional change exhibited in the form of creating, maintaining or disrupting institutions.

Author	Details of paper	Methodology and methods	Form of institutional work and institutional outcomes
Bjerregaard and Jonasson (2014)	Attempts to theorise institutional work through everyday practices of individuals as they deal with institutional complexity within a Korean credit card company	Ethnographic study Interviews and participant observations	Accounts for the relation between institutional work and institutional contradiction by suggesting that such contradictions lead to awareness amongst actors to bring about change Provides a micro dynamic lens to examine institutional change
Currie et al. (2012)	Identifies the institutional work carried out by elite professionals in maintaining their professional dominance in the healthcare sector	Case study Interviews, archival data and field notes based on observations	Identified 6 different forms of institutional work: "theorizing", "defining", "educating", "policing" "constructing normative networks" and "embedding and routinizing" Forms of institutional work interact and cross categories of creating and maintaining
Dacin et al. (2010)	Explores the process through which Formal Dining at Cambridge halls are maintained through organisational rituals	Grounded interpretive approach Interviews, archival data, press articles and observations	The organisational rituals which are carriers of cultural material, socialise individuals in terms of values and norms at the micro level which support the maintenance of institution (Social class) at a macro level. Ritual enactment (through different practices) serves as a mechanism for institutional maintenance

Daudigeos (2013)	Investigates how professionals bring new practices inside their organisation through forms of institutional work	Inductive case study Interviews, archival data and observations	Three main tactics were identified 1. "adapting frame and conversations"- e.g. rhetorical strategies 2. "Manipulating organisational processes, system and programmes"- e.g. training programs 3. "Leveraging market power" -e.g. use of power to bring about change Promotion of new practices was a part of institutional change
Gawer and Phillips (2013)	Examines the institutional work (external and internal) performed by an organisation (Intel) in response to change in institutional logics in the field	Case study Interviews, archival data	Two forms on institutional work 1. External practice work and legitimacy work 2. Internal practice work and identity work These were carried out by Intel in order to influence the shift in logic that was occurring at field level and deal with consequences of the shift
Goodrick et al. (2019)	Identifies the role of discursive institutional work to preserve the institution of pharmacy	Historical approach Books, monthly editorials, historical and government documents	Role of Rhetoric within discursive institutional work contributes to institutional maintenance and particularly, identify the role of emotions with rhetorical appeals in texts
Lok and De Rond (2013)	Explores the micro-process within different forms of maintenance work in order to restore breakdowns of institutionalised practices within Cambridge University boat club	Ethnographic study Interviews, observations and other secondary sources- emails video footage, logbooks, articles and books	Forms of Institutional work- custodial work, negotiating work and reflexive normalisation work are integral to the micro-processes through which institutions are maintained Containment work and restoration work are also key to restore the breakdown of institutionalised practices
Mena and Suddaby (2016)	Analyses the role of theorization (process of converting roles and practices into abstract models) as a form of institutional work that contributed to institutional maintenance of a regulatory initiative	Longitudinal inductive study Annual reports, press releases and online resources	Five Theorisation task: (first 2 related to practice theorization and remaining 3 related to roles theorization) 1. Policing: Help enforce norms and control compliance of institutional arrangements to ensure adoption and reproduction of norms over time 2. Educating: Educate actors regarding their new practice in their daily operations to embed the norms in minds of individuals 3. Constructing subject positions: Define subject position to facilitate enforcement of norms 4. Configuring interactions: Define how actors should interact with each other in order to construct structured relationships 5. Defining Legitimacy: Define sources of legitimacy for the firm through

			appropriate behaviour to ensure actors follow the norms These forms of theorization contribute to institutional maintenance
Micelotta and Washington (2013)	Theorises the process of institutional maintenance by examining the repair work in a professional setting (Italian law firm) when institutional order is broken	Case study Interview and documentary evidence	Institutional maintenance is conceptualised as an active and novel form of repair work; it was conceived as change as it aims to re-establish the status quo
Perkmann and Spicer (2008)	Explores forms of institutional work towards the institutionalization of management fashion practices	Theoretical paper	Political work: Reconfiguring rules and generating new configuration of actors Technical work: Designing a framework that suggests certain course of actions Cultural work: Reframe beliefs and values systems by linking practices to the wider discourse These 3 forms of institutional work contributed to the creation of management fashion institution
Zietsma and Lawrence (2010)	Explores the role of practice work and boundary work and the interplay between these two forms of institutional work in effecting change in the British Columbia coast forest industry	Case study Interviews, organisational documents and media reports	Boundary work refers to actors effort to establish, expand and undermine boundaries Practice work refers to how practices are created, maintained or disrupted The recursive relationship between boundary work and practice work is key to understanding institutional change, through cycles of stability, conflict, innovation and re-stabilization

Table 2.4: Empirical studies identifying different types of institutional work

Lawrence and Suddaby's (2006) original taxonomy of institutional work brought together various forms of actions or practices such as 'educating', 'policing' that resembled forms of institutional work that were discussed under three main categories: creating, maintaining and disrupting. The subsequent empirical studies in Table 2.4 have drawn and developed these forms of institutional works and in addition, some studies have theorized how other forms of work such as 'practice work' or 'repair work' bring about institutional transformation. My research builds on and extends the scholarly work in Table 2.4. Although these studies have identified different practices or actions that constitute institutional work, they fail to actively engage with the concept of practice. For example, some of the studies in Table 2.4 do not foreground the various elements such as materials or skills that constitute say for instance 'repair work' (Micelotta and Washington, 2013) or 'training' of stakeholders (Currie et al., 2012). If mentioned, it remains in the background of institutional work. For instance, although Gawer and Phillips (2013) mention the role of materials in their practice work, it is discussed as part of a

broader discursive strategy and therefore does not fully integrate the material dimensions within the institutional work analysis. This lack of active adoption of practice perspective within studies is also reflected in terms of level of analysis of institutional work. Smets et al. (2017) argue that institutional work literature has limited understanding of the daily practices of individual practitioners and instead studies have investigated practice carried out by organisations (e.g. Gawer and Phillips (2013)) or field level entities (e.g. Helfen and Sydow (2013)). Therefore, my research attempts to fill this gap by adopting Shove et al (2012) three-element practice framework in order to foreground the elements that constitute practice i.e. institutional work and attempts to focus on the daily practices of practitioners and it implications in relation to institutional change. By doing so, this research responds to the need to explore the 'coalface' of institutions (Barley, 2008) and attempts to develop a dynamic and complex approach to institutional change (Micelotta et al., 2017). The next section discusses different empirical work that identifies the role of materiality within institutional work.

2.4.4. Materiality in institutional work

The role of material objects within the body of institutional work is relatively scarce in the literature (Hampel et al., 2017). Scholars have tried to bring materiality into the institutional analysis (Czarniawska, 2008; Orlikowski and Scott, 2008). In the institutional work literature, the role of materials has only recently been integrated into this research stream. In the study of an Italian business newspaper, Raviola and Norbäck (2013) explore the role of technology in integrating its online and offline (print) newsrooms through the lens of agencement[11] based on an underlying notion that humans (the journalist) and non-humans (material such as a website, or print newspaper) have the capacity to act. The authors argue that such socio-technical arrangement brings about institutional work i.e. they focus on how the website (non-human material aspect) proposes possible action (institutional work) which causes dilemmas that are resolved through different temporal dimensions of agency i.e. iteration, practical-evaluative, and projective. This study associates agency with both human and non-human elements based on science and technology studies that take on a post-humanist[12] stance of materiality i.e. material configurations extending practices beyond space and time (Callon, 2008; Latour, 2005). Drawing on this post-humanist approach within practice theory, Monteiro and Nicolini (2015) conceive prizes as entities that constitute human and material elements that perform institutional work, and particularly examine how material elements play a crucial role in different forms of institutional work i.e. mimicry, educating, theorising, and reconfiguring normative networks. They argue that institutional work "needs to be understood as the result of a distributed effort of humans and materials, not simply as the product of individual intentional action" (ibid, p.74). Within the post-humanist, practice-based

[11] Agencement denotes "sociotechnical arrangements when they are considered from the point [of] view of their capacity to act and to give meaning to action" (Callon and Caliskan, 2005, p.24)

[12] Post-humanist approach seeks to decentre the human subject, particularly in terms of reconfiguring notions of agency

approach exists the theorisation of socio-materiality which posits that human, non-human elements and their agency emerges in and through their encounter with one another (Orlikowski, 2007). Katila et al. (2019) in their empirical work on the identity of entrepreneurs, explores the role of materiality in the identity work which is conceived as institutional work. They describe the ways in which different socio-material practices such as festival making, pitching and bonding construct the respective identities for entrepreneurs. Besides the agency associated with material, the characteristics, quality and variations in material is also explored in relation to institutional work. Jones and Massa (2013) explore the role of material within institutional work that underpins the legitimation process of novel practices in the context of church architecture. Their study highlights how material (i.e. the church) embodied cultural meaning and practices, but also helped in the diffusion and institutionalisation of novel ideas through variations in the physical aspects of the church, such as with innovative constructions and new material being involved.

Similarly, Colombero and Boxenbaum (2019) investigate how authentication of artefacts[13] or material objects (listed buildings) contribute to the institutional maintenance of architectural heritage. The authors draw on the relational concept of authentication through which a claim is made about the artefacts being genuine, original or true that is accepted or rejected by another within an institutional setting. They focus on the properties of artefacts (particularly irreplaceable artefacts) that make them more or less suitable for institutional maintenance rather limiting artefacts to a supportive role of verbal discourse also aimed at institutional maintenance. Rather than delving into the characteristics of materials, my research aims to highlight nuances of materiality through role of materials within practices and highlight its impact on institutions. Therefore, materials play a crucial role in terms of bringing about institutional change through the creation of new practices and identities (Katila et al., 2019; Raviola and Norbäck, 2013) and assist in maintaining practices through legitimising events and process (Jones and Massa, 2013; Monteiro and Nicolini, 2015). As "physical symbols, objects and artefacts form an important but relatively unexplored element in the chains of activities that constitute institutional work" (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006, p.215, 245), I attempt to explore the role of material in the creation, maintenance and disruption of institutions as it serves as an area for future theoretical development (Lawrence et al., 2013) and in particular the role of material in practices. Similarly, as discussed in section 2.3.3 the role of materials was also a promising area for development in the institutional logics literature. Therefore, the role of materials in relation to both bodies of literature will be explored, and then positioned in relation to my research in section 2.5.3 on pg.49.

[13] Artefacts are "discrete material objects, consciously produced or transformed by human activity" (Suchman 2003, p.8). In this research material and artefacts are used interchangeably

2.4.5. Theorizing institutional work

This section clarifies how the key concepts of institutional work such as activity and its consequence, intentionality and effort are positioned within this research in order to clarify its impact in relation to institutional change.

The first concept to theorizing institutional work is conceptualising it as a dynamic activity rather than a static accomplishment. Lawrence et al. (2009b, p.10) distinguish between institutional work as a *set of activities* depicted in terms of "creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions" and as a *set of accomplishments* exhibited in terms of the "creation, maintenance and disruption of institutions". The authors argue to focus on activities that not only broadens the area of inquiry by exploring the elements that support or hinder work but also highlights the dynamic nature of work (through practices) in terms of how they may fail or succeed in relation to their impact on institutions. In other words, institutional work as ongoing dynamic activities may have intended and unintended results on institutions. For example, institutional work practices such as training that contributes to the creation of institutions may also fail to do so due to various elements of resistance. Therefore, this conceptualisation of institutional work as an activity with intended and unintended consequences is consistent with my stance in understanding the dynamic nature of institutional change (Lawrence et al., 2011).

Intentionality or 'purposive action' is the second key element in Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) conceptualisation of institutional work. As 'purposive action' within this research is crucial in terms of its potential effects on institutions, intentionality is key to "the determination of what constitutes institutional work" (Lawrence et al., 2009b, p.13). Within my research, I draw on Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) temporal dimension of agency to theorize intentionality; intentionality can be associated with interpretations based on the past, present or future. For instance, practitioners can exhibit intentionality associated with the past by either drawing on schemas related to past routines or habits or intentionality related to future as they hypothesize futuristic responses. As highlighted in the case of agency, intentionality within my research is understood in relation to various interpretations (rather than action) in relation to practice. This will be highlighted within the meaning element of practice. Although such a relational approach to agency and intentionality contributes to the dynamic nature of practice and institutional work, there are limitation to this approach and will be discussed in section 2.5.5

The last idea is the concept of effort in relation to institutional work. Lawrence et al. (2009b, p.15) posit that institutional work requires "physical or mental effort" in order to impact institutions. As a habitual, unconscious effort of actors can support institutions (Berger and Luckmann, 1967), Lawrence and his co-authors state that institutional work requires cognitive effort and reflexivity from individuals in order to bring about the social construction of institutions and thereby institutional transformation. Therefore conscious effort can help distinguish between what does and does not constitute institutional work (Lawrence et al., 2011). In relation to institutional work, effort is a key element of my research since it

highlights how practitioner exhibit effort (both physical and mental effort- competence) in engaging in different forms of institutional work brings about institutional creation and transformation.

2.4.6. Summary

The section has highlighted how the concept of institutional work as 'purposive action' can provide a micro-dynamic perspective on institutional change. The different categories of institutional work- creating, maintaining and disrupting contribute to the unfolding of institutional change as individuals engage in these forms of institutional work conceived as practices. By adopting Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) relational and multidimensional view of agency, these temporal dimensions of agency are adopted as additional analytical lenses to highlight the variation in interpretations in relation to institutional work and thereby contributing to a complex view of institutional change. As there have been attempts to account for the role of materiality in different forms of institutional work, adopting an institutional work approach to explore the unfolding of institutional change, it provides an opportunity to account for materiality within institutional change. Since the focus of my research lies on the consequences of institutional work i.e. the unfolding of institutional change, by accounting for the role of intentionality through dimensions of agency and highlighting the role of effort, it provides additional rationale for practice-based institutional work approach towards institutional change. The empirical work within institutional work literature have loosely used the concept of practice and falls short of highlights the constituents of these forms of institutional work. In order to investigate the elements that constitute institutional work, my research adopts a practice framework within the institutional work perspective and therefore responds to the call for more a "comprehensive engagement with practice theoretical thought" (Smets et al., 2017, p.386) to drive developments in institutional theory. As I have presented the rationale for drawing on the institutional logics and institutional work literature to explore the unfolding of institutional change, I will now discuss the practice literature and how it is related to my research.

2.5. Practice literature

This section begins by providing an understanding of the concept of practice as an alternative means of exploring and understanding social phenomena in the context of change. By discussing the different theoretical perspectives of practices, I focus on the three-element practice framework developed by Shove et al. (2012) as a suitable theoretical framework for my research in order to foreground the elements of practice or in other words institutional work. The section goes on to explore the different element- *meaning, material* and *competences* that constitutes the framework, and discusses how the inter-relations between these elements and their own characteristics can bring about the emergence, maintenance and disappearance of practice, and as a result institutional change. This section concludes with the role of the practitioner, the person who plays a crucial role in the integration of the elements that bring about the practice and is discussed specifically in the context of my research.

2.5.1. The concept of practice

A practice theory perspective provides a theoretical framework for an understanding of the dynamic nature of social phenomena. Rather than focusing on the individual (subjective) or the structure (objective) that constitutes the phenomena, the focus remains on the practices that underpin the social phenomena (Reckwitz, 2002). I refer to practices as "temporally evolving, open-ended sets of doings and sayings" (Schatzki, 2002, p.87) that "consists of several elements, interconnected to one another: forms of bodily activities, mental activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge" (Reckwitz, 2002, p.249-50). Given that the existence of practice as a block or pattern depends on "the existence and specific interconnectedness of these elements" (ibid), I adopt this definition to highlight the dynamic nature of practices that evolve with time, based on the interconnection between the different constituent elements.

Practice theory originated in response to the long-standing critique of scientific rationality that dominated many theories in the field of organisation studies by focusing on how knowledge is representational through cognition in the subject-object relation, ignoring the social context within which knowledge is developed (Sandberg and Tsoukas, 2011). Sandberg and Tsoukas (2019) stress how the practice approach, based on the works of two main practice philosophers Heidegger and Wittgenstein, provided the context or background for the knowledge developed. Wittgenstein (1958) suggests that the interpretation or understanding of a rule is understood in the context of practice; 'Obeying a rule is a practice.' For example, a no-smoking zone sign is understood by an individual when they do not engage in the practice of smoking in that zone. Therefore, the act of interpretation is understood by the individual in the background of a practice (Sandberg and Tsoukas, 2019; Taylor, 1993). Heidegger (1962) on the other hand provides a relational ontological position. He proposed an existential ontology which elaborates on the notion of individuals being in the world through a form of entwinement: individuals do not exist separately but are related with material things and beings in the mesh of social practices. Besides entwinement forming the mode of existence for objects, the meaning

associated with those objects is also derived through their entwinement (Sandberg and Tsoukas, 2019). For example, the textbooks used by the teachers in my research may derive their meaning from the socio-material practice of teaching. Individuals on the other hand are able are to understand themselves in relation to practices within which they are entwined (Dreyfus, 1995).

Therefore, Wittgenstein and Heidegger provide a broad onto-epistemology that focuses on the primacy of practices which provides a background for interpretation and a relational perspective (through entwinement) of this interpretation. Besides serving as a background for interpretation, ontologically practices constitute social reality, a view which comes in contrast to that of social reality being made up of structures external to individuals, or an individual socially constructed reality (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011; Schatzki et al., 2001). In other words, practices (which are composed of sub-components, such as activities, and constitute different elements, such as objects, skills and interpretations) serve as the building blocks of social reality. When scholars examine phenomena through a practice ontology, the practice becomes the foci and the unit of analysis (Gherardi, 1996; Nicolini and Monteiro, 2017). Practices do not exist in isolation but are in relation to one to another and therefore social reality constitutes practices existing in configurations, a construct which authors refer to as knots, nexuses and assemblages (Latour, 2005; Nicolini, 2012; Schatzki et al., 2001).

The relational aspect which was described in the form of entwinement by Heidegger underpins the relational ontology of the practice perspective. This relational ontology within practice theory is captured within the idea of mutual constitution i.e. phenomena (that includes events, people, ideas, institutions and material) that exist in relation to each other are produced through mutual constitution (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011). For example, the leader cannot lead without followers, and followers need leadership. The notion of mutual constitution is that rather than focusing on them as separate entities that contribute to social order the focus on their inter-relationship, which does not imply equal but rather asymmetrical power-laden relations. Therefore, this ongoing nature of mutual constitution indicates that the construction of social reality and order is always in the making (Gherardi, 1996; Reckwitz, 2002). In other words, Feldman and Orlikowski (2011) posit that social reality (through a configuration of practices) emerges and is transformed through an instance of action or performance. Adopting this duality comes through rejecting the predominant dualistic approach of understanding the social world through either structure-agency, determinism- voluntarism and objectivism-subjectivism perspective[14] (Reckwitz, 2002; Sandberg and Tsoukas, 2019).

[14] Social analysis was dominated by the objective perspective (based on functionalism and post-structuralism) that emphasised structure over individual action or the subjective perspective (based on phenomenology and symbolic interactionism) that focused on individual ability ignoring issues of structures of the organisation (Reckwitz, 2002)

Within the field of social sciences, the practice approach has recently gained momentum within organisation studies (Nicolini, 2012; Sandberg and Tsoukas, 2019) [15] particularly within neo-institutional theory in order to understand institutional maintenance and change (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011). Adopting a practice-based approach to institutional change foregrounds the construction of social reality, or in other words may provide a deeper insight into the unfolding nature of institutional change that occurs through the enactment of different practice, which constitutes different elements. Such an approach will attempt to open the 'black-box' of institutions (Lounsbury and Crumley, 2007) and contribute to growing academic interest in exploring the 'coalface' of institutional theory and change (Powell and Rerup, 2017; Smets et al., 2017). The next section describes the different key theoretical perspectives within practice theory, and goes on to elaborate the practice framework adopted for this thesis.

2.5.2. Overview of theories of practice

Even though the practice perspective predominantly draws from the work of Wittgenstein and Heidegger, practice theorists vary in terms of their conceptualisation and theorisation of practice. As a result, there is 'no unified theory of practice' (Nicolini, 2012; Schatzki et al., 2001, p.2) and the practice literature offers different theoretical frameworks developed by traditional practice theorists such as Bourdieu and Giddens and also contemporary theorists such as Schatzki, Shove, Latour, Garfinkel and Taylor. Although these theorists may vary in terms of their epistemological conceptualisation of practice, the commonality amongst them lies within their aim to explore and examine the social phenomenon through a practice orientation. Within the social sciences, the roots of practice theory can be traced back to the works of Giddens and Bourdieu, sociologists who drew on the mutual constitution of duality stated on pg. 42 and their work is briefly described below.

Anthony Giddens (1984) proposed the structuration theory in response to the objective/subjective perspective that dominated social theory (refer to footnote 14). As it explores the relationship between the individual and their society, it particularly focuses on the interplay between human agency and structure. Giddens (1984, p.25) elaborates on how structures i.e. "rules and resources" and agency i.e. "person's ability to make things happen through capability and knowledgeability" interact to bring about stability and change. The individuals draw on the structure and this results in the production and transformation of structure (their action leads to a formation or continuation of structure). The transformation aspect of structure indicates that the individuals are not mindless human beings that reproduce structure, but that they reflectively engage in its reproduction. Giddens (1979, p.57) conceptualised the reflexive knowledgeability of individuals as "practical consciousness" which he

[15] Besides organisation studies, the practice perspective has been applied other different fields of the social sciences, such as in consumption studies (Shove and Pantzar, 2005; Warde, 2005), in education (Kemmis et al., 2014), or health (Blue et al., 2014), and across the recent public policy programs related to climate change (Shove, 2010), transportation (Spotswood et al., 2015), and energy consumption (Hampton, 2017).

refers to as "tacit knowledge that is skilfully applied in the enactment of courses of conduct, but which the actor is not able to formulate discursively." This forms the basis of human agency where the sense of knowing what to do and doing it are inter-related. Hence individual action not only supports the structural properties but also transforms it through reflexive monitoring (Giddens, 1984). This recursive relationship is explored through the process of structuration i.e. modes, through social practices, are produced and reproduced. One of the key aspects of this theory is the emphasis on the mutually constitutive relationship between structure and agency that underpins the practice which constitutes the social phenomena and forms "domain of study of the social science" (Giddens, 1984, p.75). However, it remains unclear on how these practices emerge, evolve and disappear (Shove et al., 2012). Before this is explored within the theoretical framework section, the practice related work of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu is briefly discussed.

Bourdieu (1977; 1990) was influential in developing aspects of practice through his theorisation of concepts such as habitus, capital and field. He considers habitus as "systems of durable, transposable [embodied] dispositions" that guide individuals on how to perceive and act, so that they are enabled to respond to the unfolding situation in hand (1977, p.72). Conceived as "the generative principle of regulated improvisation" (Bourdieu, 1990, p.57), habitus is not deterministic, but it evolves and transforms as the individual interacts with the social world (DiMaggio, 1979). Therefore, habitus is a product of history as it represents a complex interplay of past and present experiences that are embodied by the individual, and which provide them with a practical sense of what is to be done in a given situation. The experience of the individuals is supported by resources which Bourdieu (1986) conceptualised as the different forms of capital i.e. social, symbolic and cultural which predispose the individual to engage in certain practices over others. The individual and their experiences within the social world are situated in social settings which have their own structure and regulation e.g. school, or home, which are conceptualised as fields. The field is a space where the individual competes for resources, and is a configuration of relations between individuals (Bourdieu, 1984). Habitus of the individual guides their behaviour as they engage with different forms of capital in the social field that they are embedded in. In his work, Distinction, Bourdieu (1984, p.101) states the generation of practice through this definition below

"Practice = (Habitus X Capital) + Field"

Therefore, he suggests, practices are the consequences or outcomes of individuals' orientation (habitus) towards the resources (capital) within a social setting (field). In relation to traditional practice theorists, the practice or social order is the result of the individual's enactment of rules and resources, or their habitus, engaging with available capital in a social setting (Caldwell, 2012). Therefore, practices serve as the outcome of the interplays of these concepts, and what constitutes the nature of these practices is missing through these conceptualisations. For instance, Shove et al. (2012, p.23) state that things or

material 'barely' feature in the writing of Giddens (1984) and Bourdieu (1984), suggesting their work is mostly 'social' i.e. cognitive and structural components in relation to practices. The contemporary practice theorists on the other hand, such as Schatzki, Reckwitz, Warde and Shove, focus on developing a theoretical vocabulary in order to understand the elements of practice and is exhibited in Table 2.5

	Schatzki (2002;2013)	Reckwitz (2002)	Warde (2005)	Shove et al. (2012)
Elements of practice	Practical understanding: knows-how and skills to perform practice General understanding: shared sense of concerns in terms of appropriate behaviour	Body	Understanding	Competence
	Rules: instructions or principles that direct individuals	Mind Agent Structure/Process	Procedure	
	Teleo-affective structure: goals pursued by individuals	Knowledge Discourse/Language	Engagement	Meaning
	Material arrangements: person, things, artefacts	Things	Items of consumption	Material

Table 2.5: Elements of practice developed by Practice theorists

Building on the work of traditional practice theorists, Schatzki (2013; 2002) posits that the social world is made of social practices that individuals engage in and are made of four elements: general and practical understanding, rules, teleo-affective structure. Schatzki (2006, p.1864), however, conceives "material arrangements" as a component through which practices transpire, rather than being constituted as elements of the practice itself. His perspective also does not explore the extent to which these materials contribute to the practice i.e. are they supportive elements or directly used? On the other hand, Reckwitz (2002, p.244) provides a summary of different elements that constitute a practice as he aims to build an "idealized model of practice theory" drawing on common elements of Giddens, Bourdieu, Schatzki, to name a few. As he situates practice theory as a form of cultural theory, he compares and contrasts how the elements of practice are conceptualised differently in other cultural theories such as cultural textualism, mentalism and intersubjectivism. Gram-Hanssen (2010, p.155) states that Warde (2005) inspired by Schatzki, renames and reduces the key elements of the practice: understanding, procedure and engagement and "implicitly adds the items of consumption". Warde (2005) posits that things such as energy, e.g. electricity, are consumed for example in the practice of

cooking, and suggests that the enactment of practices depends on materials that take on different roles within the practice. Therefore, although Schatzki and Warde account for material aspect, materials either take on a supportive role or are consumed through the practices instead of being conceptualised as an element that constitutes the practice.

In order underscore the material dimension of practice, to go beyond the conceptualisation of practices as enduring or reproductive in nature developed through the works of Giddens and Bourdieu and to demonstrate how practice emerge and transform, Shove et al. (2012) developed the three-element framework of practice- meaning, material and competence. This framework highlights the dynamic nature of practices which can be created, maintained and disrupted based on the links between these three elements. Since this framework attempts to understand how practices emerge and change and foregrounds material element of practice, it serves as an appropriate theoretical framework for my research that aims to explore the micro-dynamics of (institutional) change and underscore the role of materiality within change. Further rationale for the adoption of this framework is elaborated through the nature of elements and their interrelationships in relation to the nature of the practice, which is discussed in the section below.

2.5.3. Theoretical framework: Shove's three elements of practice

Shove's three-element model initially featured in the article by Shove and Pantzar (2005) that focused on the development of the practice of Nordic walking. Initially conceptualised as skills, material and images, Shove and her co-authors (2012) refined the three elements as competence, material and meaning in their book 'The Dynamics of Social Practices'. Drawing from Reckwitz (2002) who conceptualised practice as the interdependencies between different elements that exist as a 'pattern' or 'block', Shove et al. (2012, p.24) illustrate that "practices are defined by interdependent relation between material, meaning and competence", as exhibited in Figure 2.2

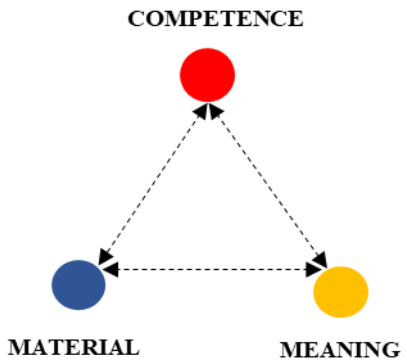

Figure 2.2: Shove's three-element practice framework

Source: Adapted from (Shove et al., 2012; Spurling et al.,2013)

Based on this model, change in practice is explored through two perspectives

1. The practice emerges, persists and disappears when the links between the elements of practice (material, meaning and competence*)* are made, sustained or broken.

2. These links (and therefore the practices) can also evolve through changes in respect to these elements. These elements also have a life of their own and can evolve through time and space.

Change in relation to the practices can be attributed to two conceptualisations i.e. *practice as entity* and *practice as a performance* (Evans et al., 2012; Shove et al., 2012). In terms of a practical illustration, the game of basketball consists of a combination of different material components such as the basketball, the court, the ring and the backboard, and requires a player to have the skills to accurately shoot the ball into the ring, and the appropriate interpretations in relation to the game. Basketball as a sport or practice can "exist as recognizable conjunction of elements" (Shove et al., 2012, p.7) and take the form of an entity. Although these elements are relatively stable and enduring over time (ibid), the elements can also be modified and as a result will have an impact on other elements of the practice e.g. continuing with the basketball illustration, a change in the dimensions of court (a larger or smaller court) will have an impact on the nature of shots used by players to score points, and will also alter their understanding of the game and as result change the practice of basketball itself. But this will come about only if the practice of basketball continues to be performed or enacted. Besides existing as an entity, practices exist as performances. It is through doing or engaging in the practice, that the interrelation between the elements of practice (as an entity) or the 'pattern' become meaningful, and are reproduced or modified. So, basketball as a practice exists only when the links between the elements are actively integrated by the practitioner through multiple enactments or performances. The enactment of practice impacts on the nature of the elements, and as a result impacts subsequent enactments and performances of practice. However, it is important to bear in mind that given the dynamic nature of practices, as much as practice emerges through these links, a practice can sustain or decline as these links are reproduced or disrupted. Based on this conceptualisation, the active integration of the elements is carried out by the practitioner who enacts the practice. However, Shove et al. (2012) portrays the practitioners as the *carrier or host* of practices such that the know-how, skills and knowledge are constituent elements of practice, rather than being characteristics that individuals possess within them. This will be further elaborated in section 2.5.5.

Therefore, this conceptualisation of practice as entities and performance is central to obtaining valuable insight into how a phenomenon (i.e. practice) can change through the modification of elements of practice (forming an entity) and also through the subsequent links between these elements that take form through enactment (performance). Asserting the significance of this conceptualisation, Evans et al. (2012) state that the dynamics of the practice, and change, is situated in the recursive relationship between practice as entities and performances. Therefore, in my research, this model provides a useful

framework to an understanding of, the unfolding nature of institutional change i.e. the replacement of institutional logics which occurs through different practices (forms of institutional work) emerging and being sustained through the interdependencies of different elements- meaning, material and competence. As this framework accounts for role of material and things within practices, it thereby contributes to the role of material in institutional change, through the previously identified gap of limited attention having been given to the role of material within the institutional work (Hampel et al., 2017) and institutional logics literature (Jones et al., 2013). An advantage of this framework lies in Shove et al's (2012) conceptualisation of practices based on three broad element which clarifies the previously more complex versions of the constituents of practice indicated in Table 2.5 and therefore serves as an analytical strategy to understand the formation, reproduction and dissolution of practice rather than focusing on reproduction; the latter being an aspect that most social practice theories focus on (Pantzar and Shove, 2010).

As mentioned earlier, practices are said to exist in a configuration such as a network or constellation, and therefore rarely exist in isolation (Nicolini and Monteiro, 2017; Schatzki, 1996). For example, the practice of teaching is based on the arrangement of other different practices which may not be directly associated with what happens in the classroom, such as the process of the admission of students into the school, the recruitment of teachers, and teacher training. Shove et al. (2012, p.81) conceptualised this relationship between practices in the form 'bundles' that are "loose-knit patterns based on co-location and co-existence of practice" or 'complexes' that are more closely integrated and dense practice relations. When the practices become closely connected, such as during the practice of driving a car, many discrete practices - the distinct acts of operating the vehicle, such as depressing the clutch; road awareness and traffic handling, such as overtaking or signalling; or the practicalities of maintaining the vehicle, such as filling the tank with fuel - tend to lose their distinct identity and are invariably 'black-boxed' as a single practice of 'driving'. Thus, in terms of complexity, the elements between practices are shared and the sequences between such sub-practices are key as they depend on each other through a process of synchronicity, sequence or proximity (Shove et al., 2012). For example, this is prominent in the case of a teaching practice that entails elements such as a textbook being used in discrete practices (reading from the textbook, writing some of the content on the board) that sequentially collaborate to constitute 'teaching'. When practices are collated into 'bundles' or 'complexes', the interconnections between them are less apparent as they can co-exist, and the spatial-material arrangements can be seen to play a crucial role. For example, the classroom is a space within which multiple practices such as teaching, and learning can co-exist. My research attempts to open the 'black-box' of the closely integrated 'complexes' of practices to in order highlight how such practices contribute to the unfolding of institutional change.

Therefore, practices as complexes or bundles evolve through the links between and within practices. Based on the conceptualisation of new practices evolving through the various links between the

elements, in such a scenario, Shove et al. (2012) indicates that these elements- material, meaning and competence exist in the world before the active integration through performance occurs. Therefore, these elements persist and circulate beyond the life of the practices within which they were integrated, and have a history of their own (Pantzar and Shove, 2010). Understanding how these elements evolve offers an additional perspective on how this has an impact on the ways in which practices emerge, evolve and die. In relation to my research, the modifications of material are particularly traced in relation to practice, to illustrate how these modifications had an overall impact on the practice, causing it to decline. The characteristics of these elements are discussed in the section below.

Material

In their conceptualisation of material, Shove et al. (2012, p.23) include "objects, infrastructure, tools, hardware and the body itself." Their position that attributes material to be a constituent aspect of practice is also shared by Reckwitz (2002) who stresses that carrying out a practice mostly requires people to use things in a particular manner. This is reflected in the basketball illustration mentioned above, which highlights the need for the material (a basketball, the court, the markings on the court) to carry out the practice (playing basketball). The significant role of material within this framework is developed by Shove and her co-authors who draw on ideas from the field of Science and Technology Studies (STS) within which the role of material, things and technology, occupy a predominant theme (Leonardi et al., 2012). Besides Pickering (1995) and Preda (1999) who posit that materials along with individuals constitute human practice, Latour (2000) through the development of Actor-Network Theory (ANT), accounts for a move towards the active role of material in the construction of social order. The theory focuses on social processes in terms of the interactions of human and non-human elements, such as the objects and technology which are embedded within a social network (Law, 1992). Within this theory, the human and non-human factors (artefacts, tools, construction materials) are given the same kind of treatment based on the theory of general symmetry[16](Fenwick and Edwards, 2011). It is important to note that Shove's conceptualisation of material does not take on this rather strong view of agency in relation to material, and focuses on human- material relations in the context of practice i.e. a relational approach to agency. Shove (2017) distinguishes between the different roles materials can take within a practice in order to explore the nuances of materiality, draws on the underlying relational perspective that views materials "as defined, constituted and positioned with respect to each other through their role within specific practices" (ibid, p.157). The different roles assumed by material in relation to practice are exhibited in Table 2.6

[16]The theory of generalized symmetry states that human and non-human elements are integrated into the same conceptual framework and assigned equal agency (Whittle & Spicer, 2008)

Role of material	Key tenants	Source	Examples in the context of schools in Chennai and Puducherry
Infrastructural	Refers to those materials that are necessary but are not directly related to the practice; Changes in infrastructure elements are in relation to devices and resources within the practice;	Sociological literature (Ha°rd and Misa, 2008; Nye, 1992)	Classroom layout; blackboard and chalk; trays and racks to store teaching material
Device oriented	Things are actively and visibly used in the performance of practice; Objects are not used per se but are *implicated* as an element of practice (as in the practice framework)	Instrumental relationships between the material and the practitioner (Giard et al., 1998)	Teaching-learning material: textbooks, ABL learning cards
Resource-based	Refers to things being consumed or used up in the course of a practice; Focusing on the material outcome of practices- things that are consumed, used or reconfigured;	Consumption literature (O'Brien, 2012)	The curriculum that is to be learnt or 'consumed' by students

Table 2.6: Three roles of material in relation to practice

Source: Adapted from Shove (2017)

Shove (2017) elaborates on these three roles of materials in relation to practice, and posits that they are inseparable and meshed together in different ways across numerous practices. Based on a material-practice relationship, she makes two proposals, and describes insights which will be discussed in relation to my research. Firstly, materials transit between these different roles i.e. materials can transit between device-oriented roles and infrastructural aspects and vice versa based on the practice. For example, the textbook which was key device in the traditional teaching practice shifted to adopting a more supportive role in the ABL teaching practice. Secondly, materials can simultaneously occupy different roles based on the nature of practice. Again, drawing on the illustration of the textbook, it can serve as a key device in the practice of the formative assessment of students (i.e. homework); and can take on a supportive role (infrastructure) when the teacher is engaged in the practice of preparing summative work (i.e. setting exam question papers) for students.

These two propositions of the material-practice relationship provide insight into the role of materials in relation to institutional change through the aspects of institutional logics and institutional work. The potential value of exploring how materials can contribute to the bringing about of institutional change through institutional work (section 2.4.4) and institutional logics (section 2.3.3) which has been previously been discussed, stands to benefit from these classifications of the roles of material and the nature of material-practice relationships. The material legitimation strategies and authenticity of material will also be discussed in relation to institutional change. This will be elaborated in Chapter 5. Besides the role of material, movement (transportation) and access to the material are crucial for the circulation of material that enables each practitioner to carry out the practice (Shove et al., 2012). As

materials are a key element in the practice framework, as an object, the practitioner requires certain skills to use them effectively in the practice. This is discussed as the next element below.

Competence

Shove et al. (2012, p.23) broadly describe competence as "multiple forms of understanding and practical knowledge" which are required for the enactment of the practice. This conceptualisation of competence draws from Giddens' (1984) terminology of 'practical consciousness' and 'discursive consciousness'. Discursive consciousness refers to "all those things that actors can say, put into words, about the conditions of their action" (ibid, p.76) and practical consciousness is described as the "stocks of unarticulated knowledge that they use to implicitly orient themselves to situations and to interpret the acts of other" (Turner, 1986, p.673). The former is a more visible form of knowledge that explains how and why individuals engage in some forms of action. The latter is a more tacit form of knowledge which individuals will not always be able to articulate since they form the taken-for-granted cultural assumptions of their lived context. Competence is broadly conceptualised within this framework and takes the form of 'embodied knowledge' which is crucial for the practitioner to successfully perform the practice (Spotswood et al., 2015) and is particularly important when they are engaging in new practices. The skills and know-how give the practitioner a sense of practical understanding that enables them to carry out the practice (Reckwitz, 2002) by effectively using the relevant material with a developed sense of, context appropriate, professional interpretation towards the new practice.

Before performing new practices, the practitioner can acquire the required competences through further education and training as these act as 'stepping-stones' which help people break into any new practice (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006; Lounsbury, 2001). However, acquiring new competences takes time, as learning new skills occurs by building upon existing knowledge and continually refining it (Geels, 2004). Some practitioners might find it difficult to (re)learn competences which they have developed over time, and thereby find making changes in their daily practice challenging. Shove et al. (2012) elaborate on how competences travel across space and time through the process of *abstraction and reversal.* Shove and her co-authors suggest that knowledge is theoretically removed from one location through abstraction and may be 'reversed' in a new setting. This 'reversal' can be carried out through training. Through training, the knowledge and competences that have become abstracted, stored in material objects such as a training manual and other material, will be reversed (reactivated in a new direction) by trainers with the new (already experienced but now again trainee) practitioners. This reversal process is key as it requires individuals to de-codify the packed knowledge held in the prior experience of the practitioners (Duguid, 2005). Shove et al. (2012) therefore argue that knowing how to decode is dynamic and practice-based, and that the willingness and confidence to engage with this process therefore varies amongst practitioners. Besides learning these competences through training, the competences themselves are transformed through the performance of practice when it is actively integrated with meaning and material. For example, the competence of driving a car evolves as the

practitioner engages in the performance of driving by effectively operating the car (material) supported with a certain interpretation of driving such as leisure or convenience (meaning). In relation to my research, competence plays a crucial role particularly in relation to institutional work. Since institutional work highlights the practical skills, reflexivity, awareness and effort of the individual actors who are embedded within the institutional environment (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006; Lawrence et al., 2009b), competence within the practice framework plays a crucial role, particularly in relation to different forms of institutional work. However, this conceptualisation of competence differs from the skills of individual actors within institutions since the practice frameworks describe competences as belonging to the practice rather than as characteristics of the individual (Reckwitz, 2002; Shove et al., 2012). The competences vary among different practices and serve as a feature of the practice itself; a (new) skill the individual needs to develop if they are to become a practitioner of that respective practice. Even though there are different competences, effort (mental and physical) as an underlying part of competence, plays a key role when practitioners are required to learn new competences that are in contrast with their existing competences and is a crucial factor allowing for new practices to emerge in order to bring about institutional change (Lawrence et al., 2009b). Effort is exercised by the practitioner not only in terms of taking the time to learn, and acquiring new competences, but also in the enactment of these competences within the specific practice. Besides having the necessary competence, and the required material for the practice, the practitioner enacts a practice based on a certain interpretation they have made of the (new) practice. This is discussed below as the third element in the framework i.e. meaning.

Meaning

Meaning is an umbrella concept that covers the understanding, emotions, mental activities and motivational knowledge that represent the interpretations and symbolic significance of a practice (Shove et al., 2012). Meanings are relational in that they are directed towards an object or behaviour (Spotswood et al., 2015) and in this context serve as a way of understanding the world of practices (Reckwitz, 2002). This element of practice draws from Bourdieu's (1977) concept of habitus which serves as an embodiment of a collective understanding that an individual develops through their experience, which is influenced by socio-cultural, historical and economic factors and by also being a part of the community (Reay, 2004). Although the concept of habitus is a characteristic of the individual, meaning within this framework is theorised differently. Even though these meanings emerge from the individual, they do so in the context of the practice, and therefore belong to the practice rather than being something that the practitioner alone holds (Reckwitz, 2002; Shove et al., 2012). Meaning as an element thus provides a collective and shared understanding of the practice that serves as an element that goes towards, contributes to, constituting the practice.

Besides a shared understanding, meanings also encompass emotions, wants, needs and values; a conceptualisation that Shove et al. (2012) acknowledge is 'tricky' given that other social theorists differentiates between such concepts through elements such as teleoaffective structure (Schatzki, 2013) and engagement (Warde, 2005) (see Table 2.5). Although this broad conceptualisation of meaning might limit one's ability to effectively theorise the role of emotions, and goals, in relation to a practice it provides the flexibility for an exploration of the role of meaning (as a broad umbrella) in relation to other elements (competence and material) within the practice. In the context of my research, meanings adopted by the practitioner (in terms of positive and negative interpretations) will be explored in terms of how it impacts the links between other elements of the practice. Given there are different interpretations that practitioners can draw in relation to the practice, the choice of meaning adopted by the individual will be discussed in detail in section 2.5.5.

Meaning, like other the other two elements- *material and competence* evolves and travels with time. Shove et al. (2012) suggest that the process of de-classification, and re-classification and association, help in understanding how meaning circulates and changes. Citing the empirical example of Nordic Walking in Finland, Shove and Pantzar (2005) discuss how the meaning of this practice had to be de-classified from frailty and re-classified to personal health and the positive characteristics of outdoor activity such as fresh air and nature. Although they explicitly state that there was no agreed account of how old and new connections were made, Shove and Pantzar (2005) discuss the ways in which the Finnish media, and promotional material such as magazines and websites played a role in the transition of meaning. Besides the classification process, meanings can also evolve through the process of association i.e. when a new meaning is extended to the practice, the existing meaning might become displaced or lost. This process of classification and association is supported through a process of codification. Codification is here described as a process of dis-embedding a competence or meaning, packaging it into an object and unpacking it in the new context, before re-embedding it through translation, and is a key underlying process in the transition and evolution of elements (Czarniawska and Joerges, 1996). My research exhibits how aspects of de and re-classification of meaning are witnessed in the change of the meaning element of practice within institutional change.

Besides taking the form of shared understandings, goals and emotions, meanings may also come from the existing rules and laws, and can influence practices (Geels, 2004) i.e. the meanings or interpretations that practitioners attribute to practice can be based on their knowledge of the existing regulations; in other words, institutional logics. As institutional logics guide behaviour of individuals (Thornton et al., 2012), logics may be instantiated through the enactment of daily practices within an organisation. Going back to the basketball illustration discussed on p. 47, the players are expected to follow the rules of the game in order to score points. By drawing on institutional logics through the meaning element of the practice framework in this research, on the one hand, it attempts to provide institutional scholars greater insight into how logics, as a macro concept, operate through micro-level practices (Smets et al., 2017);

on the other hand, this research will assist practice scholars with gaining an understanding of how the broader institutional forces have a strong impact on change in daily practices. This is particularly explored in this thesis in the context of monitoring practices in section 4.5.

To conclude, meaning, material and competence are three main elements that constitute a practice and are transformed through different mechanisms such as access and the role of material, abstraction and the reversal of competence (or codification), and the classifications of meaning. How, though, do these elements come together in relation to a practice? As these elements constitute practice as an entity, practice as a performance occurs when these elements are actively integrated by the practitioner. Before discussing the role of the practitioner, the dynamic nature of practice in relation to the nature of links between these elements is discussed below.

2.5.4. Emergence, maintenance, and disruption of a practice

Besides elaborating on the nature of the three elements that constitute a practice, Shove et al. (2012, p.14-15) posit that practices can "emerge, persist, shift and disappear" as the links between the elements are "made, sustained and broken." The focus shifts from the element itself to the process of the integration of the elements. By focusing on the links, Shove and her co-authors suggest that such an approach will describe change and stability without falling into the structure-agency trap in relation to change. Therefore, this approach is particularly suited to describing the unfolding nature of institutional change by focusing on links between the elements of practice, without prioritizing the institutional structure or actor. As the previous section discusses how practice can change in relation to its constituent elements, this section focuses on how change can also occur as a result of the dynamic links between these elements.

As previously mentioned, the three elements are relatively stable, but change evolves and transpires through time and space. Since these elements are not only interdependent but also shape each other when the other changes (Shove et al., 2012), this shift has an impact in terms of the links between the elements, and thus has an overall impact on the practice. Citing the example of changes in the practice of car-driving, Shove et al. (2012) elaborate on the work of Sheller and Urry (2000) who discuss the transformation of automobility and car driving. Shove and her co-authors, besides providing a brief overview of the elements of car driving, provide a narrative account of how the elements change over time and how the links between them have an impact on the practice of driving; as the cars were mechanically improved from heavy maintenance to being easier to operate (material), the skills of the driver were less demanding (competence) which also transformed the meaning of driving (from being a leisure pursuit, or being a chauffeur driven experience, to sharing experience with the family, and being fun). Therefore, a change in the material element disrupts the old links between the other two elements and re-establishes new links within a transformed version of competence and meaning, and as a result a new practice emerges. In such a scenario, the old competences may lie dormant in material

form (training manuals) or in memory, while meanings are accumulated i.e. layers of meaning are overlain rather than being dissolved (Shove et al., 2012). As the practice of driving is enacted, the very act of doing it transforms the elements of practice (either subtly or radically) and repeated performance sustains the links (between the elements) and therefore the practice over time (Pantzar and Shove, 2010). Overall, the change in practice has larger ramifications, particularly within organisations and within distinct organisational fields, in the context of an institutional environment.

Although the example cited above indicate that the links between the elements are successful post change in the nature of elements, it is not a straightforward process and at times there may be a struggle, or it may fail to happen. As in the case of Nordic Walking, Shove and Pantzar (2005) state how the practice was initially criticised for its uniqueness, and describe how the integration of elements was not a given conclusion but rather emerged through a group of middle-aged women being engaged in the practice over a specific weekend. Besides the practitioners sustaining the practice (through links between the element), another key aspect that may contribute to the continuity of the practice is through the monitoring.

In order to highlight the significance of feedback and monitoring in terms of the performance of practices, Shove et al. (2012) elaborate on different forms of the circuit of reproduction. This is similar to Giddens' (1984) conceptualisation of a reproduction circuit which explored the ways in which individuals engage in a ‘reflexive monitoring of action’ in terms of the flow of an activity. Since monitoring can provide feedback and outcome on past performances (Shove et al., 2012) the extent to which practitioners utilise this feedback impacts on the continuity or disruption of the practice. Based on the significance of inputs on past performances, the authors elaborate on how monitoring whether carried out by oneself or others have an impact on practice as performance and is not outside the enactment of practice but rather is integral to the performance of it. Based on the basketball illustration, the player (practitioner) is being reflexive as they remember to follow the rules of the game in order to score valid points. This self-monitoring practice is also externally monitored by the referee who use score sheets and timers (material) to ensure that the players are playing within the rules of the game. It is important to keep in mind that such forms of monitoring do not necessarily ensure a stability of practice, but rather describe change in terms of a transition of the performance of practice. In my research, aspects of monitoring (particularly materiality) are a crucial point of difference between Chennai and Puducherry, especially since the latter experienced limited monitoring in relation to ABL. This will be highlighted in detail in Chapter 4.

Overall this section, highlighted the dynamic nature of the links between the elements which can be created, sustained or broken through the changes in elements or through forms of monitoring. In relation to my research on exploring the unfolding of institutional change, which is achieved through a change in practice, the links between these elements are seen to play a crucial role in bringing about change.

Therefore, the links that are made, sustained, and broken, may result in the emergence, the continuity, and the disruption of practices. However, it is important to bear in mind that this active integration is carried out by the practitioner who enacts the practice, or chooses not to do so. Their role is elaborated on below.

2.5.5. Practitioner and agency

Within this practice framework, the focus remains on the practice rather than on the practitioners who perform the practice (Shove et al., 2012). Practitioners become the *carrier* of the practice (Reckwitz, 2002); they carry out social practices by using the skills, material and the shared understandings, according to the particular practice. Therefore, Reckwitz (2002, p.250) argues that the skills and meanings are "qualities of a practice in which the single individual participates" and are not personal attributes of the participants that are conceptualised in individualistic approaches[17] (psychologically based) which explore social change (Shove et al., 2012; Spotswood et al., 2015). Drawing on the basketball illustration, the skills and meanings of the basketball players are not contained in their heads purely as mental schema, but are conceived as being constitute elements of the practice of basketball which the player carries. Since they are engaged in a multitude of daily social practices, the individual is at the 'unique crossing point of practices' that contain within them the 'mental and body routines' in relation to practices, and are at the centre of the respective interpretations of such crossing points (Reckwitz, 2002).

Given that a practice can only exist when it is performed through the active integration of the three elements, the existence of the practice depends on the population of practitioners who carry it out. In order to explain how individuals are drawn to carry out practices, Shove et al. (2012) elaborate on how practitioners are drawn through communities of practice, brought together through shared expertise to engage in new practices. Being a part of a community or network brings the individual into that setting based on their past experiences, interpretations, and access to resources, or in other words the 'habitus' of the individual. The authors further illustrate how practice and practitioners share a dynamic relationship, and transform each other through sharing and learning; the individual becomes committed to a practice through repeated performances which bind them in a subtle way, and may become formed as habits (Shove, 2012). However, citing the example of the practice of hula hooping, Shove and her co-authors suggest that practitioners can drop out of practices due to a lack of symbolic or normative anchoring (hula hooping was not considered good or bad), the limited internal awards (hula hooping generated only a limited lasting interest, and that reduced their commitment).

[17] The individualistic approach is based on social-psychological model such as Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) or Norm Activation Model (Schwartz, 1977) that focused on individual attitude and values to explain social change. The focus remained on the individual

Overall, practitioners engage in a practice based on their social communities, with access to the required elements, based on a personal commitment and experience of the practice. Although practitioners engage in practices, they are a part of a community of practice given their social position, and may experience difficulties in engaging with or carrying out that practice. It is fair to conclude that not all practitioners will be faithfully recruited to the practice, and that there is variation in the interpretations and individual meanings that practitioners draw from the practice. For example, based on the empirical example of cycling, some practitioners believe that cycling is unattainable, in comparison with others who interpret it as something they would and can do (Spotswood et al., 2015). These variations in meaning can have an impact in relation to the other elements of the practice, and affect the overall performance of the practice. Therefore, besides the implied view of agency in terms of performance of the practice, my research attempts to explicitly highlight agency in relation to the multiple interpretations which practitioners draw in association to the practice. Therefore, I draw on Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) temporal dimension of agency, taking on an internal perspective of agency that is social and in relation to interpretations rather than action (discussed in section 2.4.2). Therefore, the three dimensions of agency that are temporal, may explain engagement in relation to meanings oriented towards the past (iterative agency), the present (practical evaluative agency), and/or the future (projective agency) (ibid). These are highlighted under the meaning element of each practice in Chapter 4 and its implications in terms of the change or stability of practices are discussed in section 6.3.2 in Chapter 6. Therefore, by highlighting the variation in interpretations that practitioners draw in relation to the practice, my research attempts to account for a more active role of practitioners within this framework where it tends to 'de-centre' the practitioner (Shove et al., 2012, p.22).

2.5.6. Summary

This section above provided an overview of theories of practice and focused on Shove et al. (2012) practice framework as a suitable theoretical framework to explore institutional change. By focusing on the three element- material, competence and meaning and the links between them, this framework not only provides a micro-dynamic perspective of institutional change but also account for the role of material as key element in relation to institutional change. The role of practitioners is not only limited to the agency exhibited through enactment of practice but also discussed in relation to various interpretation that practitioner draw within the meaning element and attempts to foreground the role of practitioners within this framework. The next section highlights the overarching research question of my study which is answered through two sub-questions.

2.6. Research questions

An overarching research question emerged from the discussion of the preceding literature review

How does a practice-based approach to institutional work contribute to the understanding of institutional change?

In relation to the empirical context of my research, the question explored the nature of different ABL related practices (constituted as practice-based institutional work) that supported the change in institutional logics from teacher-centred logic to learner-centred logic. This central research question is answered through two sub- research questions which are discussed below

1. How can the three-element practice framework contribute to the understanding of the micro-dynamics of institutional change?

The literature discussed above identified that institutional change had been attributed to either exogenous factors: political, functional, social (Oliver, 1992), or to endogenous activities, in terms of institutional entrepreneurship (Battilana et al., 2009)a, where the change in such contexts was either mechanistic and contingent, or dramatic. As such scenarios fail to capture the complex and dynamic nature of institutional change (Garud et al., 2007; Micelotta et al., 2017), scholars are suggesting a more micro-perspective approach to the study of institutional change, as unfolding through the mundane, day to day practices and routine activities of individuals (Smets and Jarzabkowski, 2013; Smets et al., 2012). By adopting Shove's three-element practice framework, this research attempts to explore how institutional change unfolds in relation to the three elements -meaning, material and competence and the links between them. The making, sustaining, or breaking of links between elements leads to the emergence, maintenance or disruption of practice, or in other words leads to the creating, maintaining or disrupting of the ABL institution that results in the shift from the teacher-centred logic to learner-centred logic (institutional logics). Therefore, the framework responds to calls to explore how institutional logics unfolds on the ground through daily practices (Zilber, 2013) and by foregrounding the elements that constitute practice-based institutional work, it attempts to open the 'black-box' of institutions (Lounsbury and Crumley, 2007) and institutional dynamics. As the practices are carried out by the practitioner, drawing on Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) dimensions of agency, it serves as an analytical tool to explore the variations in interpretations within the meaning element drawn by the practitioner that is likely to have an impact on the links between the elements and subsequently the overall practice. This not only highlights the complexity of the practice based institutional work but also responds to the need to capture the earliest moment of change (Smets et al., 2017).

2. How do materials contribute to the maintenance and disruption of institutions?

As the literature review has identified the limited scholarly work on exploring the role of material within institutional work (Hampel et al., 2017) and in institutional logics (Jones et al., 2013), this question

aims to contribute to this gap in knowledge, and responding to the scholars plea to account for the role of materials with institutions and institutional change (Lawrence et al., 2013; Pinch, 2008). Since practices are a material enactment of institutional logics (Sahlin and Wedlin, 2008; Smets et al., 2012) and materials are a key element that constitute the practice-based institutional work in this research, the role of materiality is explored in relation to managing institutional complexity and various material legitimation strategies (based on forms of authenticity) that contributes to institutional maintenance. Adopting Shove's (2017) conceptualisation of roles of material, this research fleshes out the nuances of materiality particularly in relation to the disruption of institutions and contributes to under-examined role of material within institutions (Jones et al., 2017). Overall, this question will justify and respond to the demand to account for materiality within different streams of institutional theory literature in relation to institutional change.

Collectively, these two research questions aim to explore the much needed micro-dynamic perspective of institutional change (Micelotta et al., 2017) that exhibits how the shift in institutional logics unfolds through the different forms of practice based institutional work that lead to creating and maintaining the institution. The significant role of material is underscored not only in relation to the emergence and maintenance of institutions but particularly explored with regards to institutional disruption. The next chapter discusses methodological approaches adopted to answer these questions and also provide empirical context within which it was explored.

Chapter 3 METHODOLOGY

This chapter begins by outlining the philosophical underpinnings of this research. Based on this, the rationale for the use of a qualitative case study methodology, and research methods, are presented with the objective of understanding the unfolding of institutional change through institutional work. This is followed by a section that lays out the context of this empirical research. The context of the Indian school education system is discussed and clarified how the introduction Activity Based Learning (ABL) as pedagogical method brought about a shift from a traditional approach (based on teacher-centred logic) to ABL (based on learner-centred logic). Thereafter, the practical details of the fieldwork such as gaining access, conducting an exploratory study and its relation to the main study are elaborated, followed by the data collection and management procedures. The approach to analysis is discussed as it highlights the iterative nature of research, and the chapter concludes with an explanation of the ethical standards maintained throughout this research project.

3.1. Philosophical worldviews

Creswell (2014, p.6) refers to Guba's (1990, p.17) definition of worldview as "a basic set of beliefs that guide action". Also referred to as 'paradigms' (Guba and Lincoln, 1994) or 'ontology and epistemology' (Crotty, 1998), this set of beliefs provides an overview of the philosophical underpinnings adopted for this research which impact the research design, the methods adopted and relate to the research objectives. This philosophical stance is presented below.

3.1.1. Ontology

Ontology is defined as the "study of being i.e. what is the nature of existence and structure of reality" (Crotty, 1998, p.10). This includes the question of what the fundamental parts of the world are, how they exist, and how they are related to each other. As a researcher, I acknowledge the existence of dual realities i.e. realities independent of the human mind, in the form of external objects and events such as trees and earthquakes, and realities based on the human mind that take the form of opinions, attitudes and perceptions that may impact those external objects. Ontologically, these versions of reality are broadly classified as mind-independent reality- *realism* and mind-based reality- *relativism* (Crotty, 1998) and this research takes on a relativist position on the ontological spectrum as highlighted in Figure 3.1

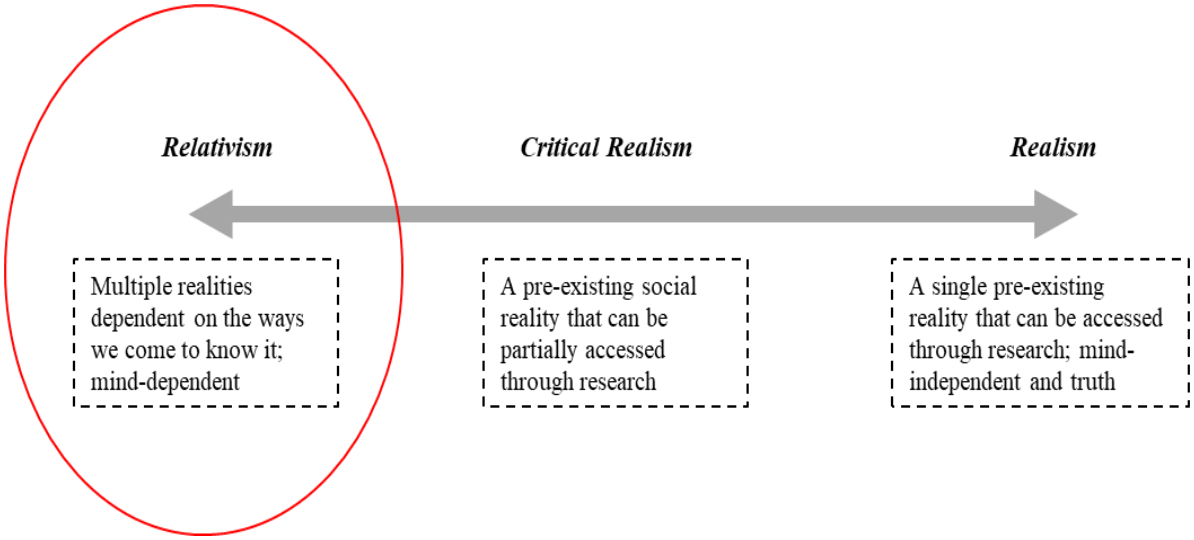

Figure 3.1: The ontological spectrum

Source: Adapted from (Braun and Clarke, 2013)

Relativism argues that there are multiple realities, and thus focuses on obtaining in-depth interpretations of these multiple, apprehendable realities (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). This argument is in contrast to *realism* that aims to comprehend the knowable 'truth' of the objective reality, or *critical realism* that believes research will provide a possible explanation for the objective reality (Braun and Clarke, 2013; Myers, 2009). Through a relativist lens, the reality that constitutes mental constructions is mediated through the sense of the individual and emerges as the human consciousness engages with objects (laden with their own meanings) of the external world. Concepts such as rationality, truth and reality are to be understood in relation to a context (Bernstein, 2011) and are shaped by cultural, social and historical factors (Chen et al., 2011) which are considered transitive elements used to describe the reality that exits independently of the human mind, as in the case of realism (Blaikie, 1993). As discussed in section 2.5.1, a practice perspective takes on relational and broad ontological position; social reality constitutes practices that evolves and transforms through instances of performance of those practices (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011; Reckwitz, 2002). Drawing on this practice ontology, institutions, in this research, are perceived "as enacted in their ongoing performance" (Smets et al., 2017, p.390) thereby focusing on the becoming nature of institutions and is elaborated in the subsequent section. Although social reality constitutes of practices (that comprises of tangible elements such as material and intangible elements such as skills and meaning), this research focuses on the participant's experiences of the phenomena i.e. the practice of ABL within a given context. The experiences of these practices are multiple and varied and therefore research takes on a relativist ontological position. The nature of meaning or knowledge of this reality is discussed under epistemology below

3.1.2. Epistemology

Epistemology is considered as the theory of knowledge, the way people understand the world and it guides us to attempt to answer the question of 'how we know what we know' (Crotty, 1998; Guba and

Lincoln, 1994). As this research focuses on the multiple realities of the participants, in the form of their varying experiences as they engage in different aspects of the ABL method, making sense of these experiences is based on the expressed views of the individuals who are positioned within those contexts. The nature of this knowledge, based on the individuals' expressed interpretations, is explored through a construction lens, particularly that of social constructionism.

Constructionism as an epistemological perspective which considers "knowledge and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of the interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context" (Crotty, 1998, p.42). It is important to note that human beings in the social world are born into a world of meaning, with a pre-existing system of culture (exhibited through context) and their initial meaningful perception of the world is based on this cultural-historical-linguistic context within which they are embedded. The meaningful realities for individuals are socially constructed and the generation of meaning is, therefore, social, a view which is further explored as social constructionism.

Social constructionism is based on the underpinning that the generation of meaning is always social. The knowledge or meaning that takes the form of mental categories or schemas (that constitute the experience) are constructed against a backdrop of shared understandings and practices (Schwandt, 2000). The knowledge or meaning is constructed through language, and discourses are interpreted within the context in which they are constructed (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). Therefore, the social reality is a function of shared meaning amongst individuals that evolves through interactions and is interpreted in the context. For instance, a person raising their hand may be interpreted as hailing a taxi on the road or aiming to ask or answer a question in a lecture. In the context of my research, the meaningful reality of the unfolding nature of institutional change, through institutional work, is rooted in this social constructionist epistemology. As discussed in section 2.4.1, the work of Berger and Luckmann (1967) in the *'The Social Construction of Reality'* conceived institutions as being a product of human interaction, which is constructed through human actions or work. They urge that although institutions have an external reality of their own, "the objectivity of the institutional world, is *humanly produced,* constructed objectivity" (pg. 57). Therefore, this conceptualisation formed the basis for Lawrence and Suddaby's (2006) institutional work that focused on purposive actions aimed towards the emergence and the transformation of institutions, and draws upon the sociology of practice that is based on social constructionism (Reckwitz, 2002). As meaningful reality is said to be socially constructed and then also interpreted within its respective context, my research also adopts an interpretive stance in order to show a deeper understanding of the meaning. The focus is on interpreting the meaningful reality, rather than on the construction of a meaningful reality that could be explored through hermeneutics; exploring the role of languages (Crotty, 1998). This interpretive based social

constructionist approach is clarified in relation to social constructivism; the latter being a term that is used interchangeably with social constructionism.

Social constructivism is an understanding of the construction of subjective meanings, and particularly focuses on the "meaning-making activity of the individual mind" (Crotty, 1998, p.58). My work focuses on the meanings (social knowledge) shared amongst the participants which is contrast to social constructivism that highlights complexity of participants' meaning (Creswell, 2014). Other interpretive positions such as phenomenology, that identifies and understands the subjective experiences of respondents from their point of view or symbolic interactionism that focuses interactions between human beings and things/symbols take on rather individualistic, subjective approaches to meaning (Creswell, 2007; Crotty, 1998) which is in contrast to the focus of this research. The socially constructed, meaningful, reality in various forms of institutional work (practices) in relation to ABL is explored through a qualitative approach since the aim is to obtain an in-depth understanding of the particular phenomenon of interest (ABL) (Braun and Clarke, 2013); the rationale for this approach is presented below.

3.2. Qualitative research design

The research design provides direction and procedures for research inquiry. Also known as "strategies of inquiry" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005) or "varieties" (Tesch, 1990), research design is here referred to as a *methodology* that serves as a " the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice of methods to the desired outcomes" (Crotty, 1998, p.3). Research designs can be broadly classified into quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods (Creswell, 2014). My study adopts a qualitative approach since the focus is to obtain and interpret the participants' experiences of the phenomenon of interest and is consistent with relativist based social constructionist philosophical worldview. This approach is in contrast to a quantitative approach that would focus on statically examining the relationships between variables, and is aimed at theory testing and generalisation (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Similarly, a mixed-method approach that combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches with a focus on neutralising any bias within each approach (Creswell, 2014) would not serve the above-mentioned research focus. With a focus on understanding rather than on causal explanations or predictions, a qualitative research approach was adopted.

Although there are numerous strategies within qualitative research presented by Tesch (1990) based on the interests of the investigator, Wolcott (1992) classified through strategies for data collection or Denzin and Lincoln (2011) through variations in qualitative strategies, this section presents the rationale for adopting the case study methodologies in relation to five common approaches to qualitative inquiry developed by Creswell (2014).

Table 3.1 briefly outlines the characteristics of the different qualitative methodologies, with the choice for my research, case study being exhibited by being shaded in grey

Characteristics	Narrative Research	Phenomenology	Case Study	Ethnography	Grounded theory
Type of problem best suited for design	Explain life of individuals through stories	Highlight the essence of phenomena of interest	To provide in-depth understanding of case or cases	To understand the shared patterns of culture amongst a group of individuals	To develop a theory from data gathered
Unit of analysis	One or more individuals	Individuals who share the same experience	An event, program, activity, organisation or more than one individual	A group of individuals who share a culture	A particular aspect of the data: process, event or interaction amongst participants
Data analysis strategies	Form of narrative, presenting elements of story (themes) using chronology	Data analysed for textual and structural descriptions and key statements that provide 'essence' of phenomenon	In depth description of case and theme developed within/across case	Analysis involves description and development of themes	Different forms of coding: open, axial and selective coding to develop theory
Application in institutional theory studies	(Zilber, 2002)	(Gill and Burrow, 2018)	(Hardy and Maguire, 2008; Micelotta and Washington, 2013)	(McPherson and Sauder, 2013)	(Greenwood and Suddaby, 2006)

Table 3.1: Characteristics of five qualitative approaches

Source: Adapted from Creswell (2007)

Although the justification for taking the case study approach will be elaborated in the subsequent sections, its suitability as a methodology for this research in comparison to other qualitative approaches is evident. For instance, narrative research that focuses on exploring the life of an individual, aiming to present the experience of the individual(s) in the form of a story is in contrast to my research that aims to understand participants' experiences of ABL through different practices. Similarly, a phenomenological approach that seeks to describe the essence of the 'lived experience' of the participants is inappropriate for this research as the focus is beyond that of the subjective experience of a small number of selected participants. Since this research aims to understand the nature of practices in relation to institutional change rather focusing on subjective, small number of individual(s) experience or opinion(s) of institutional change (for instance, a specific official or a group of teachers), the above-mentioned methods are not suitable for this research. The characteristics and rationale for case study methodologies along with the methods adopted are discussed below.

3.2.1. Case study methodology

Case studies as an empirical methodology provide an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon of interest. The 'case' can take different forms such as an event, program, activity or one or more individuals (Creswell, 2014; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). This conceptualisation is based on a broad definition of a case as being a "thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries" within a 'bounded context' (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.27), with a focus on the delimitation of the particular case. The boundaries of the case can be based on the location, the actors involved or on the time (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 1995). By providing a deeper insight into the characteristics of the case within a specific boundary, this methodology serves to provide "holistic description and explanation" of the case in order to support and extend theoretical assumptions (Merriam, 1988). This holistic description is achieved through contextual elaboration and is crucial in obtaining an in-depth understanding of the case (Fitzgerald and Dopson, 2009).

Within the empirical aspect of this research, Activity Based Learning (ABL) as pedagogical practice (institution) is the 'case' which is to be explored in the context of two sites located within the cities of Chennai and of Puducherry. The rationale for examining this phenomenon in relation to these contexts is discussed under section 3.3.2. From a theoretical perspective that views institutions as phenomenological constructs that are dynamic, Suddaby (2010) has acknowledged the need to return to case study approaches to explore how participants experience institutions. Scholars have used case studies to explore the different aspects of institutional work particularly through a practice perspective (see Table 2.4) as they attempt to capture the dynamic, messy nature of institutional work and change. As case studies are best suited to an exploration of the 'how' and 'why' questions (Stake, 1995), this methodology is suitable for developing an understanding of how the practice based institutional work contributes to institutional change, and how materials bring about institutional complexity and change. As case studies may adopt quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods (Yin, 2018), this research adopts

a qualitative case study methodology as it offers the flexibility and scope to cope with the dynamic nature of organisations (Fitzgerald and Dopson, 2009). This dynamism is supported by the fact that researchers have limited control over the phenomena of interest (Yin, 2018) and hence examine the case within its natural setting. This key aspect of case study methodology is highlighted in section 3.4.3. Yazan (2015) highlighted the variations in case study designs amongst three methodologists: Yin, Merriam and Stake. Amongst these methodologists, there are two main approaches to a case study methodology i.e. a post-positivist variance-based case study, as developed by Yin (2018), and a broad social-constructivist/interpretive approach, as proposed by Merriam (1988) and Stake (1995). Since my research draws on a social constructionist and interpretive approach which is in contrast to Yin's (2018) post-positivist stance, it is not suitable for my research. Since my interpretive stance aims to explore how individuals experience institutions (Suddaby and Greenwood, 2009), my study adopts approaches developed by Merriam (1988) and Merriam and Tisdell (2016) in terms of type of case study and sampling strategy that accounts for the comparative (ABL explored across two sites: Chennai and Puducherry) and historical (ABL was an event that occurred in the past in Puducherry during data collection) aspects of this case study; aspects that are not discussed in detailed by the two other methodologist. Based on Merriam's approach, this research adopts an interpretive case study approach in order to interpret the phenomenon of ABL through an institutional work perspective.

Besides being an interpretive case study, since ABL as a single case is explored in two different sites, in Chennai and in Puducherry, this methodology adopts a comparative perspective. Highlighting the similarities and differences between the two sites in the case of ABL has dual benefits: firstly, by identifying similar practices or events it increases the potential generalizability of findings, indicating that they are not wholly idiosyncratic; secondly, by identifying the differences, it will bring to light local conditions which influence the case (Miles et al., 2014). Through this comparative lens, it provides a deeper understanding and contributes towards a more sophisticated and powerful explanation of the case (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). Scholars in the field of organization studies have argued for the vigour and value of comparative case study as a methodology towards theory building (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007; Fitzgerald and Dopson, 2009). In relation to different aspects of institutional change (work and logics) although case studies have been frequently used, adopting a comparative lens is rather limited to few studies (Helfen and Sydow, 2013; Pache and Santos, 2013; Reay et al., 2013) as the focus remained on investigating a single case in detail. In my research, similar forms of institutional work are identified across the two sites in relation to the creation and maintenance of ABL, as presented in Chapter 4, and the differences between the two sites is foregrounded through the role of materiality in relation to the disruption of ABL, as presented in Chapter 5. The comparative analytical lens is more central to the findings rather than focusing on the uniqueness and complexities of each case (Stake, 1994). This comparative approach is further discussed in the data analysis section.

3.2.2. Trustworthiness of case study methodology

The section above highlighted the appropriateness of case studies as a methodology to explore the unfolding of institutional change through forms of institutional work. Although it is suitable methodology to understand the complex and dynamic nature of institutional change, case study as a methodology have concerns in relation to generalization (Merriam, 1988). For instance, Gibbert et al. (2008) critiqued the ability of case studies to contribute to theory development and create solutions for real-world management problems. In order to strengthen its position as a research methodology, case study methodologists have proposed different strategies, such as forms of external and internal validity and reliability (Merriam, 1988; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016) and are presented in Table 3.2 below

Meaning of Criteria	Procedures adopted within research
Internal validity: Assess how findings represent multiple constructed realities	Triangulation of data and methods 1. Adoption of multiple methods: interview and documents 2. Multiple perspectives (data) gathered through different stakeholders
Reliability: Extent to which the research findings can be replicated	Researcher position clarified through rationale of methodological choices; Triangulation as discussed above
External validity: Extent to which research findings can be applied in other contexts and situations i.e. generalizability	Thick description of case; Multi-site case study

Table 3.2: Trustworthiness of case study methodology

Source: Adapted from (Merriam, 1988; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016)

Adopting an interpretive case study approach seeks deeper explanations of the phenomena of ABL in the context of Chennai and Puducherry, and the data was collected primarily through semi-structured interviews and suitable documents, which were then reviewed for data triangulation. Triangulation through multiple methods as discussed on pg. 68-68 and multiple sources of data (interview data from different participants) strengthens the internal validity of this research or in other words increases the credibility of the study countering concerns of findings being from a single source or method (Patton, 2015). Through triangulation, reliability of this research, also known as dependability or consistency (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) is attained and contributes to the internal validity of this research (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). Finally, the external validity of the study i.e. the ability to transfer or generalize findings is improved by providing "sufficient descriptive data" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p.298) for other researchers to check if the findings can apply in their situation (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). These

components of trustworthiness of the case study will be displayed through various methodological and interpretive choices. I will now discuss the two main research methods adopted for this study.

3.2.3. Research methods

Semi-structured interviews

Interviews as a research method "attempt to understand the world from the subjects' points of view and to unfold the meaning of their lived world" (Kvale, 2006, p.481) and are one of the most common and appropriate methods used in qualitative research (Braun and Clarke, 2013; Creswell, 2014; Myers, 2009). As interviews vary in terms of *mode* (the format of the interview, in person or virtually via telephone or email) and *type* (characteristics of each interview in terms of the sequence of questions, structured, semi-structured and unstructured) (Fielding, 2003), I conducted face to face semi-structured interviews with the participants supported by an interview schedule (see Appendix 1A and 1B). Particularly suitable within the case study methodology, semi-structured interviews (also known as in-depth interviews) are useful for exploring the topic of interest openly, in a way that provides the researcher with the flexibility to cover unanticipated concepts or ideas related to the phenomenon (Merriam, 1988; Yin, 2014). In relation to *mode* of interviews, face to face interviews were scheduled with participants in order to ease the process of audio-recording the interviews (bilingual interviews) and also helped to capture the observed non-verbal cues such as aspects of frustration, or laughter (Denzin, 2009; Gibson and Brown, 2009). Although face to face interviews are more time-consuming and may limit the response time for both individuals (Braun and Clarke, 2013), it provides an opportunity for the researcher to capture real-time primary data at the convenience of, and for the comfort of, the participant interviewee. The practical details of conducting interviews are discussed under section 3.4.3. In relation to analysis, the rationale for adopting thematic analysis is now presented.

Thematic analysis refers to "the process of analysing data according to commonalities, relationships and differences across a data set" (Gibson and Brown, 2009, p.127). These patterns within the data are highlighted through various 'themes' which are an aggregate of different codes and categories. Developing themes is a popular form of analysis within qualitative research (Creswell, 2013; Miles et al., 2014). As there are many versions of thematic analysis - inductive, theoretical, experiential, as stated by Braun and Clarke (2013), this research adopts a flexible approach to thematic analysis with a primary focus on a constant comparison of themes between Chennai and Puducherry (Harding, 2013). Through thematic analysis the similarities, differences and relationships within the data (Gibson and Brown, 2009) is analysed in order understand the reasons for different outcomes in the case of Chennai and Puducherry. Further details of the thematic analysis will be discussed in section 3.5.2. Interviews are often supported by gathering different documentary evidence and this method is elaborated below.

Documents

Documents can refer to a "broad spectrum of material, both textual and otherwise" which can take various forms such as official or routine documents, archival documents (Coffey, 2014, p.367). They can be prepared specifically for the research project e.g. participant research diaries or can take the form of pre-existing material e.g. minutes of the meeting (Flick, 2015). In this research, documents serve as 'analytically filtered' material which is used as "source of information" for the researcher, with data being appropriately *selected* according to the particular research problem (Gibson and Brown, 2009, p.66) instead of being *generated* in the case of semi-structured interviews discussed above. It can be used to verify key information, to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources that will support the interpretations made of the data gathered from interviews (Yin, 2014). Institutional scholars often combine these two methods (interviews and document review-see Table 2.4)) in exploring institutional change in order to achieve a more holistic and potentially reliable understanding of the phenomenon, thus strengthening the dependability and validity of the study. In terms of analysing the various documents, this research employed general questions to understand the purpose and target audience of the documents (Gibson and Brown, 2009) i.e. by whom it was produced, and why, how and when was it developed. The various documents helped develop a rich description of the implementation of ABL in both cases, from which key ABL practices were developed. The choice of documents emerged from the interview data and through brainstorming over a developing collection of sources (refer to Appendix 2). Combining methods i.e. documentary research along with interviews, not only supports but also contradicts some participants' comments, which provides an opportunity to view a them from multiple perspectives also potentially severs the form of triangulation that strengthens the quality/ robustness of data (Gibson and Brown, 2009).

The sections above have provided the rationale for adopting an interpretive case study methodology that also adopts a comparative perspective to highlight the difference in outcome within the two sites-Chennai and Puducherry for the case of ABL. Contextual significance for this research is evident through the relativist based social constructionist epistemological underpinning and crucial within case study approach in order position the empirical findings within the broader context. Therefore, the next section will present the contextual background for the case i.e. the Indian school education system and will then return to discuss the field study work carried out within this context.

3.3. Context: Background of the case study

The case of ABL is situated within the context of the Indian school education system. The following sections will provide an overview of the structure and context of the school education system in India, focusing on the nature of pedagogical practices in primary schools before the introduction of ABL, in order to illustrate the radical and transformative nature of change in practices within schools. This is followed by a discussion of the contexts within which ABL as a pedagogical practice was implemented

i.e. the context of Chennai and Puducherry. This section will thereby provide the crucial contextual understanding within which the empirical findings of my research are positioned and discussed.

India has a population of 1.35 billion as of 2018, making it the second-most populous country in the world after China (World Bank, 2019b). It is one of the youngest countries in the world with a median age of 27 years and a literacy rate of 74.37% in 2018 (World Bank, 2019a). Politically, the country has 28 states and 8 union territories (UT)[18], governed by the central and state government (National Informatic Centre, 2019).

*Figure 3.2: Map of India**[19]

With regards to education, the bulk of the expenditure is borne by the state government and is supported to varying extents by the central governments based on the schemes being implemented (Alexander, 2001). The school education system can be segmented based on the levels of education offered, the ownership of schools, and based on the decisions of individual educational boards. A uniform structure

[18] A Union Territory is an administrative division (like a state) in India. They are usually governed by the central government. Puducherry is an exception since it has its own legislature and cabinet of ministers due to special constitutional amendments; it is given partial statehood

[19] All photographs are available on public online sources unless clearly stated

of school education is adopted through India across four levels: primary, upper primary/middle, high school and higher secondary[20] as illustrated in Figure 3.3

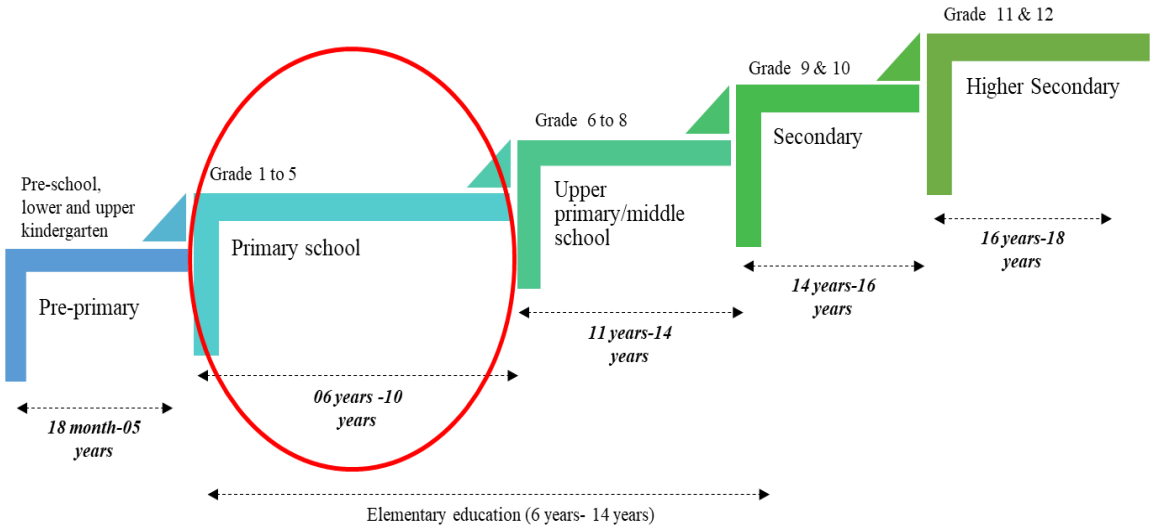

Figure 3.3: Structure of Indian schools by levels of education

Source: Adapted from (Anderson and Lightfoot, 2019; Parruck and Ghosh, 2014)

In terms of ownership, schools can be owned by the government (central, state or local bodies) or can be private establishments (organisations, trusts or societies) (Parruck and Ghosh, 2014). Schools can also be classified in terms of their different educational boards or the curriculum[21] offered, such as different national, state and international boards as exhibited in Figure 3.4 below.

[20] The precise divisions can slightly vary between the states in India

[21] Curriculum in this context refers to the subjects and the content offered by a school. They cannot be adjusted easily and are prescriptive in nature.

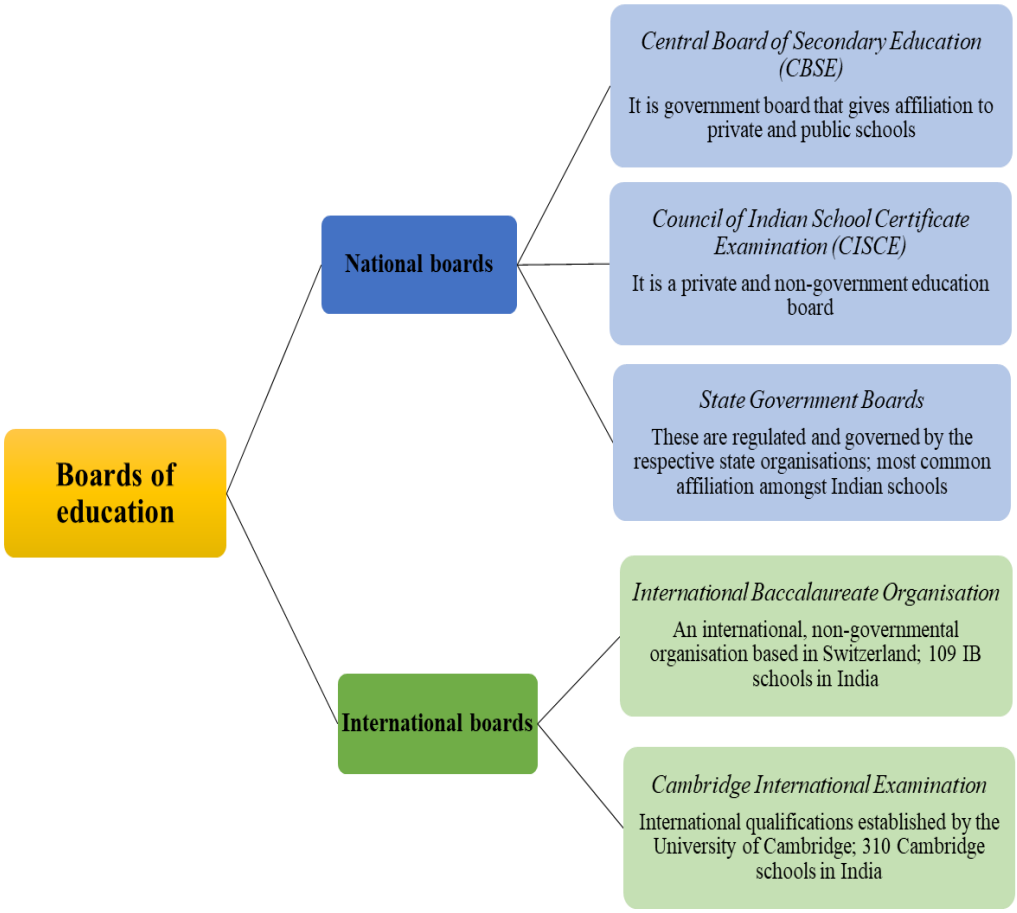

Figure 3.4: Segmentation of schools based on educational board affiliations

Source: (NCERT, 2018; Parruck and Ghosh, 2014)

With regards to the national and state government boards, they have the autonomy to develop the curriculum, to design and conduct examinations, and also to grant the recognized certificates required for higher education (Anderson and Lightfoot, 2019; Parruck and Ghosh, 2014). In terms of improving the quality of school education, broadly both these boards are advised by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) that also plays an active role in publishing textbooks and supplementary materials, in organising teacher training, in conducting research, and also in support the implementation of various educational policies (NCERT, 2018). The difference between the central and state boards is that the latter is regulated and supervised by the respective state apex organisation. For instance, the state of Tamil Nadu has its own state board syllabus, supervised by the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT). It is important to note than the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) offers the standard curriculum throughout the country (unlike state boards that vary amongst states) and CBSE carries a general perception of higher standards and quality associated with the abilities of their students to succeed at a high level in the competitive examinations which is an essential qualification for entry to certain higher educational courses (Jaisankar, 2012; 2013). This significance of the CBSE curriculum is further discussed in context of Puducherry in

Chapter 5. The subsequent sections will provide an overview of the characteristics of the teacher-centred pedagogical method. Particularly, the issues from this method are mentioned and shift towards a more learner-centred approach is illustrated through the ABL method. In this context, the traditional method and ABL method are perceived to be institutions and the institutional change defined though this shift from teacher-centred to learner centred logic occurs through the practice-based institutional work.

3.3.1. Traditional method: Teacher centred logic

The Indian school pedagogical practices were traditionally characterised by the teacher and textbook-dominated classrooms, and focused on repetition, rote learning, and examinations (Alexander, 2001; Clarke, 2003; Kumar, 2005; Sriprakash, 2010). Historically, this method can be traced back to British rule in India through 20th century, during which education was used to maintain social order in the colonial state through a carefully regulated and controlled pedagogy (Kumar, 2005; Ratnam, 2013; Sriprakash, 2012). During the colonial period, the bureaucratic education system exercised control over teaching through textbooks and conducting examinations which were the 'turnstile' to entry to employment (Kumar, 1988). Besides its historical significance, Ratnam (2013) discusses how a hierarchical teacher-learner relationship is culturally and socially embedded, based on the religious teaching and learning practices of Guru (teacher) and Shishya (student)[22], caste-based[23] and controlling adult-child relationships. Teachers held an authoritative position in the classroom, as they were respected and feared by students through virtue of their "knowledge and experience" exhibited through teacher's transmission of information (Ratnam, 2013, p.534). Thus, within this hierarchical relationship, teachers played an active role in the delivery of content that was passively received by students.

[22] *Guru* (teachers) and *Shishya* (student) relationship established during the times when the Vedas (Indian scriptures about Vedic religion that shaped Hinduism) were being preached

[23] Historically, there were four board occupational castes: The Brahmins (priests, teachers and scholars), Kshatriyas (warriors, kings and aristocrats), Vaishyas (Traders), and Shudras (those who provide for the other 3 castes). Additionally, the fifth class, the 'outcast' was formed and comprised of the Dalits (the 'untouchables') and other Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) (Chauhan, 2008). Religiously, the caste system was based on the ancient Brahmanical (Vedic) texts (Pruthi, 2004).

*Figure 3.5: Traditional method in Indian schools**

This lecture style of teaching failed to acknowledge different learning capabilities amongst the students and was also driven by the need to complete the curriculum presented in the officially provided textbook which served as the main teaching-learning material in the classroom (NCERT, 2011). Being information-heavy and content-driven, teachers positioned textbooks as 'sacrosanct' and were under pressure to complete the content present in the textbooks (Bhattacharjea et al., 2011, p.84). Being perceived as a body of 'truth' by the teachers, the students are expected to memorise the content present in the given textbooks rather than to reflect on, to question, and to explore that material taught to them (GoI, 1993). This learning skill-set of the memorisation of textbook content which was assessed during examinations, was perceived by society as a benchmark of success (Mukherjee, 2002). Examinations were perceived to be a major determinant of future life achievements and success, an assessment that not only resulted in teachers being pressured to complete the syllabus on time but also caused great anxiety and fear amongst students due to the shared belief (amongst parents and teachers) that doing well in the set examinations mattered for their financially and socially stable life (GoI, 1993). As a result of the social lore attributed to examinations, teachers and parents began to prepare students to face examination from the time that they begin school. As the teacher-centred method has dominated classrooms before independence in 1947 (Kumar, 2005; Sriprakash, 2012), it acquired the status of a 'norm' that was institutionalised in relation to Indian school pedagogical practices. However, this method resulted in poor learning standards among students, as they did not learn real study skills which would be useful in the future.

With regards to primary education, reports indicated that the learning performance of students was low, compounded with issues of high student absenteeism and limited resources (GoI, 1992a; 2006; Sriprakash, 2012). In the case of primary education, due to large scale illiteracy witnessed post-

independence in the 1950s, free and compulsory education for all, up to the age of 14 (constitutes primary and upper primary) or in other words 'Universal Elementary Education' (UEE) was repeatedly emphasised through various constitutional amendments, policies and initiatives such DPEP (District Primary Education Programme), SSA (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan) and the Right to Education Act (RTE) in 2009 (Alexander, 2001; Kingdon, 2007; Parruck and Ghosh, 2014). DPEP was launched in the early 1990s with an aim to achieve UEE by increasing school enrolment through access to different resources such as financial assistance towards textbook provision, the improvement of school infrastructure, and teacher training (Azam and Saing, 2017; Radhakrishnan and Akila, 2000). Funded by external organisations and donors[24], DPEP was implemented in districts where female literacy was below the national average and not implemented throughout the country (Kumar et al., 2001). In order to achieve the universal elementary education throughout the country, SSA was launched by the government of India in 2001; it was as a successor of DPEP as it extended the goals of universal elementary education throughout the country (GoI, 2016; Govinda and Mathew, 2018; Kingdon, 2007). The objective of the SSA programme entailed bridging social and gender gaps in elementary education, universal access and retention with a primary focus on quality issues (Kingdon, 2007). Although the initial focus was on access to elementary education, there were quality concerns in school education. Particularly, poor standards were reflected in terms of low learning achievements, which were attributed to the rote learning techniques, the heavy reliance on the textbook as learning material, a lack of modern assessment techniques, and a series of assumptions related to students' learning abilities in terms of pace, and individual capacity (NCERT, 2011; Niesz et al., 2011).

A learner-centred approach to education was proposed as a suitable way to address the existing issues of student enrolment and poor quality of education. Various national educational policy documents such the National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986, the Programme of Action (PoA) 1992, and the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 "envisioned a child-centred approach" to promote the universalisation of elementary education (NCF, 2005, p.4). This urge to adopt a "child-centred and activity-based process of learning" (GoI, 1992a, p.14) within the policy narrative can be traced back to the pre-Independence social agenda of activists such as Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore who drew ideas from western educationalists such as Dewy and Montessori[25] (Sriprakash, 2012). This learner-centred pedagogy places the child at the centre of the learning process giving primacy to their

[24] Funds constituted a loan from the World Bank and grant money from UNICEF, Department for International Development (DFID) UK, the European Union and government of Netherlands

[25] John Dewey, an American educationalist focused on the social experience of learning and emphasised how student learn by interacting with their environment. Maria Montessori was an Italian educationalist who developed child-centred methods based on observation of students as they engaged in different activities in resource intensive learning environment (Sriprakash,2012). The underlying principle for both educationalists is that students learn by 'doing'.

experience and active participation in class (GoI, 1992b). Particularly programmes such as DPEP and SSA also focused on improving the quality of education through various learner-centred approaches (Brinkmann, 2015; Sriprakash, 2012). For instance, Joyful Learning, a pedagogical practice in which the teacher teaches through song and dance was implemented under the DPEP scheme in Tamil Nadu (Niesz et al., 2011; Sriprakash, 2012). Overall, the educational policy narrative and schemes or reforms advocated a paradigm shift from the teacher dominated, joyless and rote based learning to a more student-focused, burden-free, activity-based approach to learning. In other words, it advocated a change in institutional logics (i.e. a collective meaning framework) shift from 'teacher-centred' to 'learner-centred' methods within the institutional environment of school education. This regulatory shift resembled the exogenous factors that were discussed in section 2.2.1.1.

One of the quality initiatives that actively imbued a learner-centred paradigm was Activity Based Learning, (ABL) a pedagogical practice that promoted burden-free, meaningful and independent learning through students engaging in different activities (UNICEF, 2012). The roots of ABL can be attributed to a consortium of innovative pedagogical approaches and educational philosophies such as 'Joyful Learning', Self-Learning Methodology (SLM), Multi-grade multi-level (MGML) methodology[26], principles from Montessori education and other philosophical approaches of different educationalists such as J. Krishnamurti and David Horsburgh that were developed in India (NCERT, 2011; UNICEF, 2012). The prototypes of ABL were developed in the Rishi Valley Education Centre in the state of Andhra Pradesh, India. The basic principles of MGML (learning ladder, learning cards/material) formed the base of ABL which were piloted in many Indian states such as Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh between 1990-2010 (Centre, 2015; UNICEF, 2012) and the method varies amongst these states (UNICEF, 2015). The rationale for exploring ABL in the context of the two cities, Chennai and Puducherry is given below.

Chennai, the state capital of Tamil Nadu, in particular, was considered to be the genesis of a successful ABL movement that was implemented throughout the state for a period of 10 years. In contrast, although ABL was implemented in Puducherry, a Union Territory[27] located within Tamil Nadu, the method was sustained only for three years. The contexts of these two sites in relation to the emergence and decline of ABL will follow the discussion of the features of the ABL method that is presented below.

[26] MGML- Multi Grade Multi level methodology is students across different grades and learning capabilities are grouped in a single classroom.

[27] A Union Territory is an administrative division (like a state) in India. They are usually governed by the central/union government. Puducherry is an exception since it has its own legislature and cabinet of ministers due to special constitutional amendments; it is given partial statehood

3.3.2. Activity Based Learning (ABL): Learner-centred logic

ABL was an innovative pedagogical approach that aimed to promote active and meaningful learning through different materials; it marked a radical shift from the previous teacher dominated, lecture-style classroom set up that focused on the memorisation of content from textbooks (NCERT, 2011; Niesz et al., 2011). In an ABL classroom, primary school students (ranging from grade one to four)[28] were spread across groups and learnt at their own pace through the support of different materials such as learning cards and a learning ladder with the teacher facilitating and monitoring their progress individually (Anandalakshmy et al., 2007). The main purpose of ABL was to ensure that students learn by engaging in different activities such as games, role play, reading, discussions, and writing that is designed to develop life-long learning skills (UNICEF, 2012). In this research, ABL is conceptualised as a pedagogical practice that is constituted of various sub-practices. Specifically explored here are the three sub-practices of ABL[29]- teacher's position in the classroom, teaching style and assessment practices in order to highlight the radical change of method (from Traditional to ABL) as result of this paradigm shift (from a teacher-centred to a learner-centred logic).

The ABL classroom was a contrast to the traditional classroom set-up that had been characterised by the teacher standing in front of the classroom (or seated on a chair) delivering the given content to students who were seated in rows facing the front. As a facilitator of learning in ABL, the teacher sits along with their students either on the mats or on small stools, a co-location that improves their rapport with the students (UNICEF, 2015) as exhibited in Figure 3.6 below. This was the first key sub-practice of ABL as it attempted to change the teacher-student relationship from one which was traditionally authoritarian to that of a non-hierarchical and approachable relationship (Mahapatra et al., 2009). Teachers were positioned next to students to encourage a fear-free and friendly learning environment.

[28] Based on the student strength, some schools combine only two grades i.e. grade one and two, instead of all four in a single classroom

[29] These practices are in term of ABL implemented in the context of Chennai and Puducherry. Although these practices are underlying principles of ABL, they are not necessarily followed in the other states in the same manner

*Figure 3.6: Teacher seated with students in group one and two in ABL classroom**

Besides a change in the teacher's position in the classroom, the material used in ABL classrooms and the overall classroom layout was rather different. Students were required to complete activities laid out in 'learning cards' that were identified based on a logo, and colour coded based on the class level (Anandalakshmy et al., 2007). These learning cards are based on the prescribed curriculum (in this context the Tamil Nadu State Board curriculum) and sequentially arranged in the 'learning ladder' (UNICEF, 2012). Therefore, the curriculum is laid out in the learning ladder in terms of competences to achieved by the student; a cluster of competences take the form of 'milestones' in the ladder; the completion of a group of milestones results in completion of a grade, and the progress of each student is recorded by the teacher on the achievement chart (Mahapatra et al., 2009). The learning cards are usually kept in trays that are arranged on the racks located in a corner of the classroom and learning ladders, achievement charts are also displayed within the classroom. Figure 3.7 and Figure 3.8 depicts a sample of English learning cards and ladder and the layout of the ABL classroom.

Class Room 11

Black is beautiful

Once an elephant named Hatu, Beru the deer, Chinna the tortoise, Renu the giraffe and Menu the monkey lived in a forest. Hatu did not like the colour of the body and wanted to change it. So his body colour was changed as blue. A flock of thirsty birds landed on him.

He jumped up and ran to his friends and changed his colour as brown. When resting at night, rats started to dig holes and bite him. Again he was painted in green. When he took rest, ants and bees thought it was a lovely leaf house. They started to crawl on Hatu. He ran to the river and poured water on himself. Hatu was black again. Then he was happy of his beautiful colour black.

Elicit the answers by asking the following questions

1. Where was Hatu, Beru, Chinna, Renu and Menu lived?
2. What was Hatu's wish?
3. Why was Hatu black again?
4. What is the moral of this lesson?

Meaning for the words.

1. crawl - move along very slowly
2. pour - flow or cause to flow
3. prickle - a small thorn
4. croak - sound made by a frog

Figure 3.7: Illustrative English learning card and learning ladder

Source: Researcher's camera

*Figure 3.8: ABL classroom layout**

Besides the cards and ladder, as seen from Figure 3.8, ABL classrooms also have a low-level blackboard that provides written practice for the students, a wireline to display student's artwork, science and mathematics kits and various other charts used by students, such as a weather chart and hygiene chart (UNICEF, 2012). Therefore, in terms of material, ABL incorporates the use of different teaching-learning materials which was a shift from the dominant role of textbooks in the classroom. In the ABL method, textbooks were initially rarely used as a teaching material and preference was given to teaching students through the ABL material. The materiality of this method is presented in Chapter 4. Students in an ABL classroom are spread across different groups within the classroom, in contrast with the traditional method that has them seated in rows facing in the same direction. The former aims to provide a flexible learning environment instead of a structured and controlled atmosphere. With 6 different groups in the classroom, students progressed from one group to another, and as a result they engaged in different forms of learning i.e. teacher-supported groups, peer learning, independent learning and self-evaluation. These are identified through the grouping charts that are given in Figure 3.9

Figure 3.9: Group logos cards[30]

Source: (UNICEF, 2015)

The students are taught to identify their position on the learning ladder and pick up the relevant learning card from the trays. They will match the logo of the learning card with that of the grouping charts to ensure they are seated in the right group, a placement which is also monitored by the teacher. Once they complete the activity on that learning card, the progress of the student is noted in the achievement chart and the learning card is returned to the appropriate tray. The student goes back to the learning ladder and identifies the next learning card and repeats the process. Through this process, the student goes through the sequence of finishing the learning cards through working with the different groups. The teacher is not only actively required to engage with students in the first two groups but is also expected to support and monitor students in the remaining four groups. Given that this teaching style of providing individual attention to students in and across groups contrasts with the traditional lecture method, this as a second sub-practice of ABL is specifically explored in this research.

Another unique characteristic of ABL is how assessment practices (formative and summative) are built into the learning ladder and indicated through different logos. These logos come in between and towards the end of each 'milestone' in order to ensure that the student has gained the required competences. As these activities are part of a sequence of completing the learning cards, students may not even realise that they are being assessed (UNICEF, 2015). This helps promote the underlying principle of providing a stress-free learning environment for students who will not have a fear of assessment in contrast to the traditional method of assessment i.e. examinations. As ABL advocates 'burden-free' learning, the concept of formative assessment (i.e. homework) which was common in the traditional method initially

[30] This is just an example of the group cards. Sample of group cards that will be placed amongst the groups in the classrooms and have been modified from the time of initial implementation

did not feature in ABL as students completed most of their assessments in the school itself (Anandalakshmy et al., 2007); any additional homework was extra work for the teacher. Therefore, the assessments are the third sub-practice of ABL explored in this research.

Overall, in my research, the three sub-practices of ABL: the teacher's position, the teaching style and the assessment practices constitute the inter-related 'complexes of ABL' (Shove et al., 2012). Since material practices are considered as the physical instantiation of institutional logics (Gawer and Phillips, 2013; Sahlin and Wedlin, 2008), these ABL sub-practices (that represent learner-centred logic) are discussed in comparison with the sub-practices of the traditional method (that represent teacher-centred logic). As institutional change is defined in terms of a replacement of logics, the unfolding of change is depicted through the shift from traditional to ABL practices; each identified as an institution respectively. Supporting and enabling practices such as training and monitoring are also highlighted in relation to this institutional change.

Characteristics	Teacher-centred logic (Traditional method)	Learner-centred logic (ABL method)
Role of teacher	An authoritative position as they transmit information to students	Facilitates the student's learning process, supporting and encouraging them
Role of students	Passive receivers of information; rarely challenge the teacher	Active learners as they participate in learning as they engage with teachers
Teacher-student relationship	Hierarchical and underpinned with fear and respect	Attempts to make teacher approachable and friendly; positioned to more 'equal' than hierarchical
Teaching-learning material	Textbook is the main material; flash cards and blackboard used as supplementary material	Different learning material: learning cards, ladders, maths and science kits
Teaching style	Teach the entire class together based on assumption of equal learning capabilities amongst all students	Opportunity to pay individual attention to students acknowledging various learning capabilities amongst students
Assessments	Standard assessments of written examinations tests and homework; underpinned by fear and pressure to perform well; assessed for memorisation	Variety of assessment in built in learning material; based on free and burden free learning; assessed for skills or competency
Learning style	Rote learning; student expected to progress at a pre-set standard pace	Meaningful and holistic learning: students' progress at their own pace

Table 3.3: Characteristics of teacher-centred and learner-centred logic

The following section will discuss the implementation of ABL in the context of the two cities in which the research was carried out, Chennai and Puducherry.

Chennai

The southern state of Tamil Nadu with a population of 72 million, had an overall literacy rate of 80%, which was higher in comparison to the national average of 74% (Census, 2011a). The state has 32 districts with a combination of rural and urban populations; Chennai, the state capital having the largest urban population of 4.68 million (Census, 2011a; Kannappan et al., 2016). In terms of the administrative set-up, the city is governed by a civic body, The Greater Chennai Corporation, which is headed by the Mayor along with 200 councillors and a Corporation Commissioner. The commissioner oversees different departments such as education, revenue, and the town planning of the city which is divided into 15 blocks monitored by zonal officers (Corporation, 2008). Besides being a site of rich historical and cultural heritage[31], the city has also been a centre for various innovative education initiatives, such as 'Joyful Learning' in the early 1990s: a teaching practice through dance, music and drama, various literary movements to promote science education, and functional literacy and enlightenment movements

[31] During the colonial period, Chennai formally known as Madras served as administrative subdivision and trading centre. Before the British rule, the coastal city served as military and economic centre for many centuries

(Niesz et al., 2011; Radhakrishnan and Akila, 2000). Particularly, 'Joyful Learning', was a precursor to ABL in Tamil Nadu but had limited impact in government schools within the state due to a lack of access to resources (ibid). The implementation of ABL is briefly described in relation to the city of Chennai, the capital of Tamil Nadu, a fast-growing metropolis which was the initiator of the ABL movement within the state.

Spearheaded by Mr MP Vijayakumar, a civil servant who was then the Commissioner of Chennai Corporation, ABL was piloted in 13 model government schools in 2003 by the Chennai Corporation with funds from UNICEF (Niesz et al., 2011). The characteristics of this officer and his use of resources and power resembled aspects of endogenous elements (Institutional Entrepreneurship) discussed in section 2.2.1.2 on pg. 19 that supported the implementation of ABL. ABL was initially implemented for grades one and two and then followed by grades three and four, with the Tamil language being the medium of instruction (Corporation, 2008). Teachers played an active role in developing the ABL material and in training their peers; teachers were selected across different blocks in the city of Chennai and were appointed as 'Resource Persons' (RPs) and went on to train other teachers(Niesz et al., 2011). Besides teachers, ABL training was also provided for other key stakeholders such as head teachers and monitoring officials i.e. District Educational Officers (DEOs), Additional Educational Officers (AEOs) (Bedi and Kingdon, (no date)). Following the initial success in the pilot schools, ABL for grades one to four was rolled out in a phased manner; it was extended to all 264 schools in Chennai Corporation in 2004-05; later expanded to 4100 schools (10 schools per block in the state) in 2006-07, and finally implemented state wide to 37,500 government schools in Tamil Nadu in 2007-08 (NCERT, 2011). Since 2008, the ABL method has gone through modifications which are reflected in Table 3.4.

Period	Nature of change
2008-10 2011-12 2012-13	Reduction in the number of learning cards Introduction of Samacheer Kalvi (curriculum reform) Introduction of English medium sections in elementary education
2013-14	ABL restructured as Simplified- ABL (SABL) post curriculum reform and incorporated the following changes: 1. Common logos across subject and number of cards reduced 2. Textbook revamped and introduced as supportive teaching-learning material

Table 3.4: Modifications in relation to ABL in Chennai

Since the ABL material i.e. the learning cards and learning ladder were designed based on the curriculum content already published in the textbook, the curriculum reform that was introduced in the state of Tamil Nadu in 2011 had an impact on ABL. In 2010-11, the Uniform System of School Education (USSE) or Samacheer Kalvi curriculum was introduced in order replace the various

education boards[32] that existed in the state with a "common syllabus, textbooks and examination system that will ensure social justice and provide quality education" (GoTN, 2011, p.29). As a result of this curriculum change, ABL was modified as Simplified- ABL (SABL), a change which brought about some key problems. As highlighted as a shaded row in Table 3.4, the focus of my research is on the changing material element during the restructuring of ABL as SABL in order to explore the role of materials in relation to institutional change. SABL existed until 2017-18 and the pedagogical practices in government schools were revamped when another curriculum reform was introduced in 2018, leading to the disruption of the already 'simplified' form of ABL, SABL. In the new pedagogy that continued to draw on aspects the learner-centred logic, students used the textbook instead of learning cards, continued to learn through activities and were spread across four different groups (Sivgami Sundari, 2018). Overall, the implications of changes in the material aspects from ABL to SABL are discussed in terms of maintaining the practice in Chennai and throughout Tamil Nadu, a continuity which was not the case in Puducherry. That context is discussed below.

Puducherry

The Union Territory (UT) of Puducherry is located within the state of Tamil Nadu. As a UT, the governance and administration come under the central government. However, with constitutional amendments, Puducherry has its own legislative assembly and cabinet of ministers and therefore has a special status. Puducherry, as was the case throughout Tamil Nadu, had an average literacy rate of 80% that was higher than the national average of 74% (Census, 2011a). The UT constitutes four districts: Puducherry, Karaikal (both located in Tamil Nadu), and Mahe and Yanam (located in the neighbouring southern states of Kerala and Andhra Pradesh respectively) (Department of School Education, 2016). This research focuses on Puducherry in relation to ABL. The district of Puducherry has a population of 1.2 million people (Census, 2011b) and is divided into five zones, with the main administrative district of the UT being characterised as having a semi-urban population, with the local inhabitants engaged in agriculture and educated individuals working in the industry and service sectors (Directorate of Information Technology, 2013b). The city continues to preserve its rich cultural and historical heritage as a French Colony; the four administrative regions were ruled by the French from 1674 to 1963 after which it officially became a part of India (Directorate of Information Technology, 2013a). However, in terms of education, the traditional pedagogy as in the case of Chennai was in practice[33] (SSA, 2009). As in the case of Tamil Nadu, Puducherry has its own school education department that monitors the provision of education across all levels (pre-primary to higher secondary) through the government, the aided, and the private schools. Although independent in terms of administration, in terms of academic

[32] Before the introduction the Samacheer curriculum, the state of Tamil Nadu had various educational board such as Matriculation board, Anglo Indian board and Oriental board that were offered in only private schools whereas the state board was offered in government and some private schools.

[33] Stated by participants in the interview

matters, the UT of Puducherry did rely on the state of Tamil Nadu for the development of its curriculum and for the provision of textbooks and other material (Committee, 2005)i.e. Puducherry did not have an independent body (such as SCERT[34]) responsible for the development of the syllabus as the case in Tamil Nadu.

This reliance on Tamil Nadu in terms of the development of educational material had an impact on the implementation of the ABL approach in Puducherry. Given that the success of ABL in Tamil Nadu had gained national momentum, the officials in the SSA department were keen to implement ABL in Puducherry, particularly in view of then-existing low learning outcomes (SSA, 2009). These officials had visited ABL schools in Tamil Nadu and witnessed the benefits of ABL through classroom observations[35]. Therefore, with the support of the SSA department from Tamil Nadu, ABL training was offered for Puducherry teachers, and the ABL method was then adopted in the government primary schools from December 2008 (SSA, 2009). This was only for schools in Puducherry and Karaikal as they were based on the Tamil Nadu education system (GPS Pudupalayam, 2010; The Hindu, 2008). ABL was implemented in all 204 government Tamil medium primary schools in the districts of Puducherry and Karaikal (SSA, 2011) instead of its being rolled out in a phased manner as in the case of Chennai and rest of Tamil Nadu. This distinction was attributed to there being a smaller number of schools to be covered, in comparison with the whole of Tamil Nadu, and also a belief in the success of the method as had been witnessed in Tamil Nadu.[36]

However, ABL was sustained only for a limited period (2008-12)[37] since the UT of Puducherry had a change in the curriculum from the state-board Tamil Nadu curriculum, to the central government CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education) curriculum that was also underpinned by the learner-centred paradigm. By adopting the CBSE curriculum, the UT attempted to bring uniformity across the boards within its different districts. While Puducherry and Karaikal followed the Tamil Nadu board, Mahe followed Kerala and Yanam with the Andhra Pradesh education board (Fennell et al., (no date)). This also subsequently resolved the problems of the appointment and posting of teachers amongst the different districts within the UT (ibid). Although attempts were made to continue with ABL based on the CBSE curriculum by developing the appropriate ABL cards (between 2012-13), the practice could

[34] As mentioned in section 3,3., SCERT (State Council of Education Research and Training) is a state level organisation that is responsible for designing and revising the curriculum and syllabus and organising teacher training.

[35] Interviews with SSA official and trainer

[36] As stated by a Participant during the interview.

[37] ABL was partially implemented in the academic calendar (June- April) in 2008 and fully implemented for three full academic years (2009-12).

not be sustained. Chapter 5 will discuss the various factors that led to the switch in the curriculum and explores the decline of ABL as a result of this switch, from a material perspective.

In relation to the two sites, ABL as a pedagogical practice was sustained for a longer period in the case of Chennai within Tamil Nadu (2003-2018) by comparison with Puducherry (2008-12), as depicted in Figure 3.10.

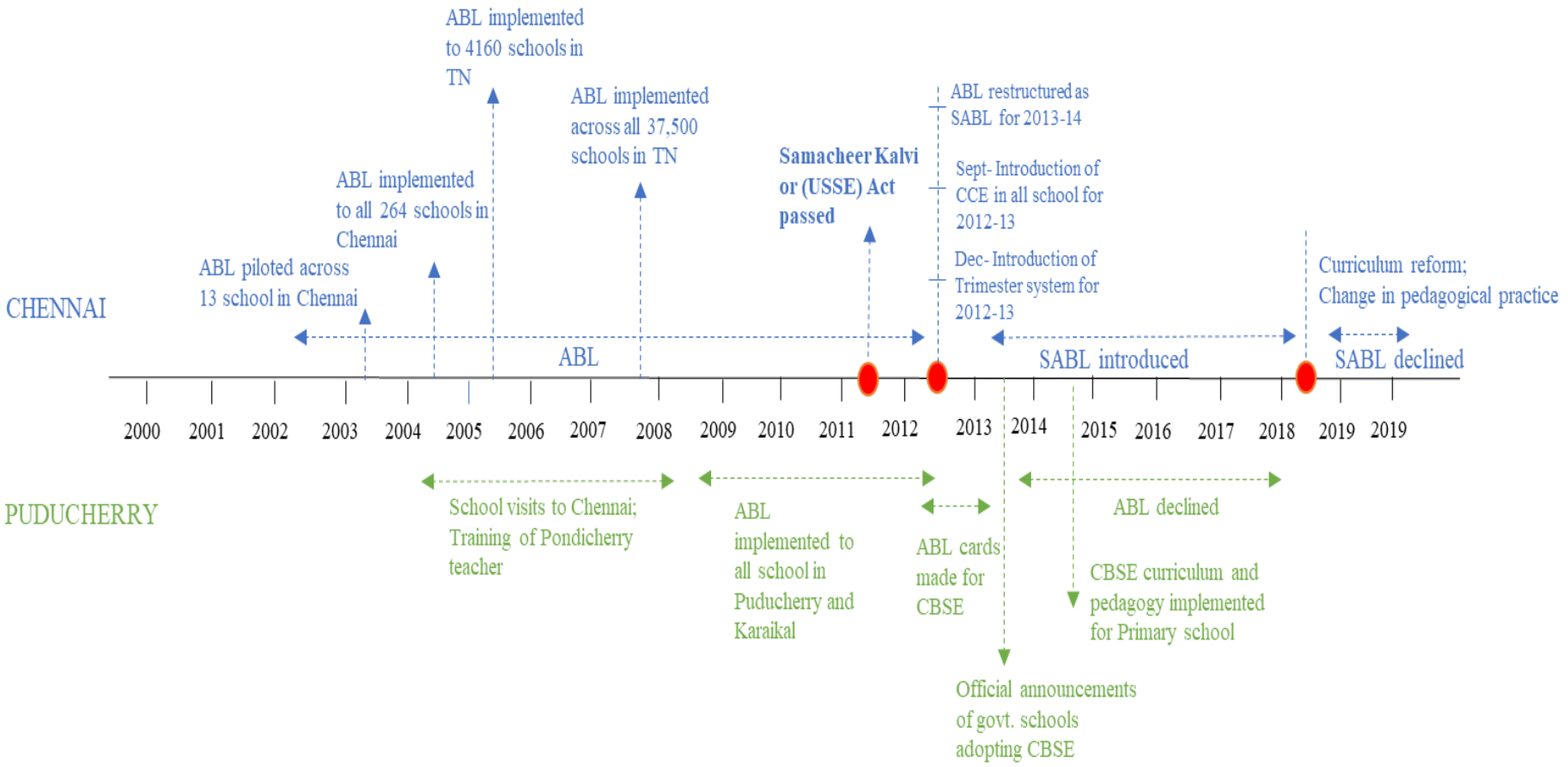

Figure 3.10: Timeline of ABL implementation for Chennai and Puducherry

The timeline highlights how the change of curriculum has an impact on the pedagogical practices in both cities. Overall the sections above set out the contextual background for the case of ABL within the Indian school education system and provided rationale for exploring ABL across two sites. The comparative stance within the case study approach will bring to light the differences in the ABL practice within Chennai and Puducherry and explore the material aspects for the decline in ABL practice. Having set out the context, I will now return to discuss the research methods adopted during fieldwork, along with details of the sample population, data management, and conclude with the data analysis.

3.4. Fieldwork

This section will discuss the practical details of the research in terms of gaining access in the field, developing and conducting an exploratory study and the approaches taken in relation to the main study. The timeline for the fieldwork and analysis for the research is exhibited in Figure 3.11.

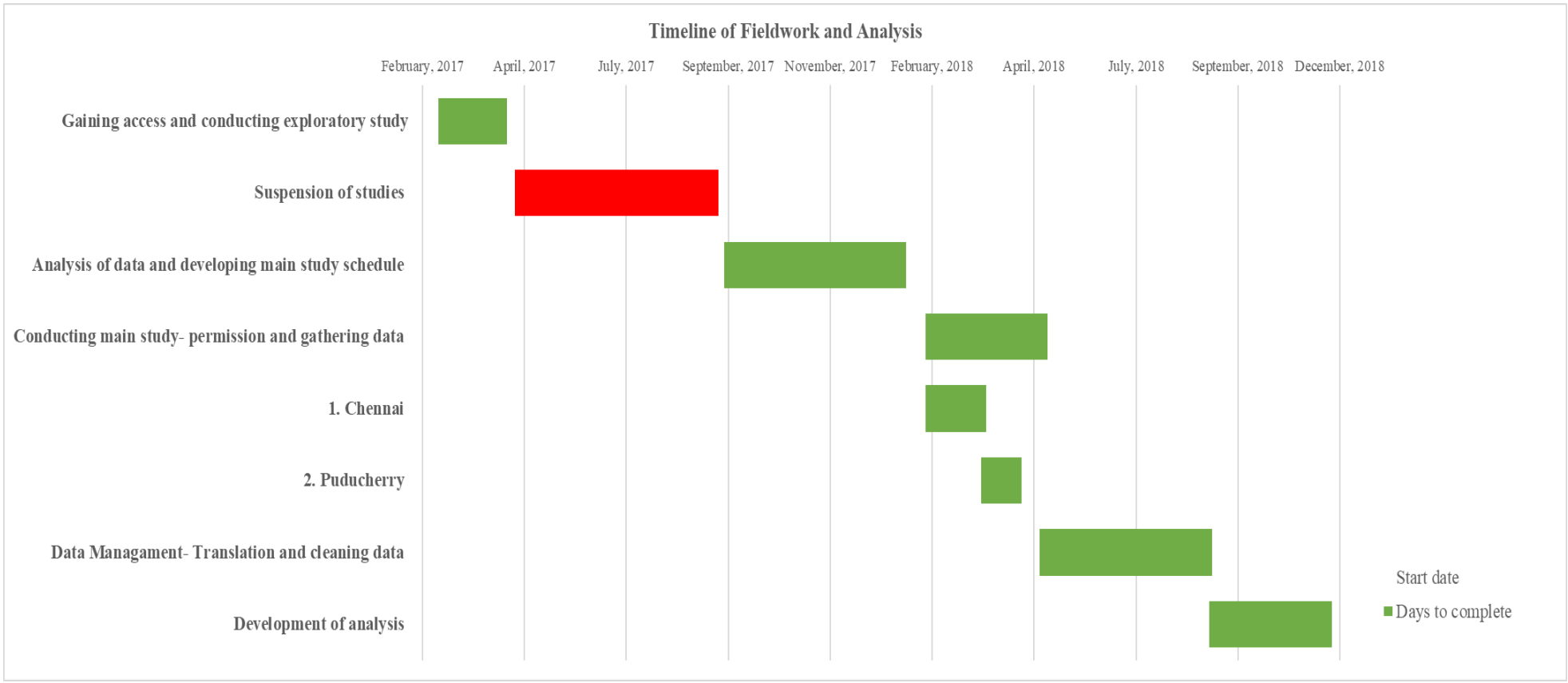

Figure 3.11: Timeline of fieldwork and analysis

3.4.1. Access

Since many researchers find it easier to negotiate access to the research site using contact and connection (Duke, 2002; Reeves, 2010) I used personal networks in order to establish initial contact with the concerned department and officials. After multiple visits to the education department in Chennai, I was able to schedule appointments with officials concerned. During the meeting, the research project was explained, and permission was granted to conduct an exploratory study. The use of personal networks to get access to officials was only carried out in the case of Chennai whereas in Puducherry, I directly established contact with the officials concerned via emails. In order to meet officials, multiple trips were made to Puducherry in order to set up appointment and get the required permission and was an equally time-consuming process given the logistics involved. As initial contact and permission was granted for the exploratory study, during the main study it was less time-consuming to get permission letters from the respective departments (Appendix 3A and 3B); the permission letters were crucial in terms of access to participants[38]. Having got the required permission to conduct the study in both sites, the access to research participants themselves was also challenging and is discussed in section 3.4.3 on pg. 92-93.

3.4.2. Exploratory study

An exploratory study was conducted in the contexts of Chennai and Puducherry in order to understand why the ABL method declined sooner in the case of Puducherry and to see whether both cases were suitable for a comparative study. A total of 8 participants were interviewed (2 teachers and 1 teacher trainer from Chennai; 3 teachers and 2 officials from Puducherry) between February and March 2017. With a sample of different stakeholders, semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the nature of the participant's experience while implementing ABL, and in the case of Puducherry the reasons for the decline were discussed. Since ABL was in marked contrast to traditional teaching methods, certain key aspects of ABL, such as the training process, distinct features of ABL such as sitting on the floor, and the teaching of students individually, were discussed as the participants elaborated on their ABL experience. Data gathered was transcribed, coded (open coding) and a constant comparative method was adopted to identify the similarities and differences in the participants' ABL experiences across the two sites. This initial study helped to build a rationale for adopting Puducherry, where ABL had already been seen to be unsuccessful, as a useful comparative site to Chennai, as within that location ABL was still being implemented at that time. In analysing the factors that led to the decline of ABL in Puducherry, the interviewees stated that switching to the CBSE curriculum instead of continuing to follow the Samacheer curriculum introduced in Tamil Nadu in 2008 had been key, and thus warranted further exploration in the main study. Therefore, the exploratory

[38] When approaching schools, the headteachers wanted to see the permission letter before they let me meet the teachers. A few teachers also asked for the letter before beginning the interview

study helped establish initial access to participants, improved the line of questioning for the main study, and gained access to relevant documents. Based on the exploratory study findings, theoretically, I approached the question of institutional change in relation to ABL being analysed with a focus on exogenous factors, such as the antecedents of de-institutionalisation (i.e. the de-institutionalisation of a traditional method giving way to an ABL method) as described in 2.2.1.1. In addition, the process of institutionalisation (taking the different stages/phases of institutionalisation) was adopted to explore how ABL became a norm only in the context of Chennai and not Puducherry and why that was the case. This was to compare with the reasons for the failure of institutionalisation in the case of Puducherry. Based on this theoretical framework, I re-entered the field to conduct the main study. During data collection for the main study, I was informed that a new pedagogy was to replace ABL method in the case of Chennai. The next briefly mentions how this change was accommodated during field work and its impact on my theoretical stance.

3.4.3. Main study: Participants and methods

As permission letters were being processed for Chennai, I was informed in February 2018 that the ABL practice was most likely to be discontinued from the next academic year (June 2018- April 2019). As this was re-iterated by participants when I approached them for interviews, the interview schedule was modified to include aspects of the decline of ABL in Chennai as well. Participants' perceptions regarding the decline of ABL in terms of reasons, details of new pedagogy replacing ABL was explored. In relation to the theoretical framework, since ABL was to be removed in Chennai, it meant that institutionalisation of ABL didn't occur in the case of Chennai and Puducherry. The consequence of this change in terms of theoretical approaches will be discussed in section 3.5.2. Therefore, my case study approach was able to accommodate this unexpected change in the field, providing strong justification for the choice of methodology that accounts for the researcher's limited control over the phenomenon of interest (ABL) (Fitzgerald and Dopson, 2009). The sections below will present the nature and rationale for the choice of research participants, and the respective data collection methods.

Research participants

Since the focus of case studies is to obtain an in-depth understanding of the phenomena (Creswell, 2007), selecting appropriate research participants takes priority (quality) over large sample sizes for the study (quantity). In my study, participants were selected based on *purposive sampling* in order to gather "information-rich" data that will generate "insight and in-depth understanding" of the topic of interest (i.e. ABL) (Patton, 2002, p.230). Since my research focused on key practices that contributed to initial creation and maintenance of ABL method in both contexts, I focused on participants who were instrumental in the initial implementation of ABL and also those who continued to implement the practice (in the case of

Chennai). As a result of this, tracing those participants was challenging and hence snowballing sampling was adopted as research participants were asked if they knew anybody suitable and willing to take part in the study (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). In terms of sample breakdown exhibited in Table 3.5, teachers who were the key practitioners of ABL formed the largest sample. Head teachers, teacher trainers and officials who were instrumental in supervising the overall rollout of ABL in both contexts were also interviewed. Multiple stakeholder perspectives helped develop a multi-faceted and holistic approach towards understanding ABL by accounting for various socio-cultural, institutional and political aspects.

Sample breakdown	Chennai	Puducherry	Total	Breakdown by Gender	
				Men	Women
Teachers	21	10	31	1	30
Head teacher	5	1	6	1	5
Teacher trainers	2	1	3	1	2
Officials	2	6	8	7	1
Total	**30**	**18**	**48**	**10**	**38**

Table 3.5: Sample size breakdown

In the sample above, a number of participants were part of the initial implementation phase of ABL in both Chennai (from 2003 onwards) and Puducherry (from 2008 onwards). As a result of this timeframe, some participants had occupied different roles. For instance, some of the ABL teachers had also served as trainers or Resource Persons (RPs) during which they trained other teachers in their respective cities. On completion of their trainer duties, they resumed their role as ABL teachers in the classroom. Some of the head-teachers also served as ABL teachers before their promotions. Rather than presenting and distinguishing data based on participant's role (which was difficult to identify in many interviews), data will be presented in terms of the collective and shared understanding practitioners draw in relation to ABL. The data will be presented in relation to the participants who have been given pseudonyms (see Appendix 4).

Since I had a base in Chennai (it is my hometown), I had access to resources to support data collection and most of the interviews were completed in Chennai before I proceeded to Puducherry (exhibited in Figure 3.11). As the ABL method was still being implemented in Chennai at the time, access to key participants who were implementing the method was easier and therefore more data was collected in comparison to Puducherry (as exhibited in Table 3.5). In spite of Puducherry officials giving an initial list of participants who were actively involved in ABL in their city, recruitment and data collection in the case of Puducherry proved to be more challenging for me due to multiple reasons: 1) recruitment and access to participants was difficult since ABL was not in practice and concerned participants were spread across the UT of Puducherry; 2) limited time, logistics and monetary constraints required that I had to complete data collection in shorter

time frame in comparison to Chennai. Hence the sample size is smaller for Puducherry in comparison to Chennai. Preliminary analysis of data during data collection in both sites indicated no new information was emerging from the sample. In light of no new data coupled with time and monetary constraints, data collection in both sites were terminated (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). Data was predominantly gathered through semi-structured interviews and review of documents. As the rationale for adopting such methods has been discussed in section 3.2.3, the practical aspects of such approaches are presented below

Data collection procedures

Most of the interviews were conducted either at work (i.e. schools or office) or in the homes of the participants based on their convenience. After providing a brief description of the research, the statement of informed consent (see appendix 5A and 5B) was read and signed by the participant. The interview guide (see appendix 1A and 1B) was prepared with relevant questions exploring participant's experience during the implementation of ABL, covering certain practices such as assessment and teaching style, and simultaneously allowed the interviewees to delve further into relevant themes, for instance, the difficulties experienced during monitoring, or the significance associated with materials such as the textbook. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews enabled me to explore aspects that were previously not accounted, by making modification to interview schedule in order to account and explore unexpected issue such the reasons for the decline of ABL in Chennai in real-time during the interview. For instance, the perceived significance of the textbook as a teaching-learning material, in comparison to the learning cards, being elaborated by the teachers, was information that was be gathered through this method. This would have been impossible if a strict sequence of questions had been followed (with structured interviews), or broad guidelines being given to participants which may have caused them to deviate from the topic focus (with unstructured interviews). For example, they might have evaluated the characteristics (such as the quality and structure of the learning cards and textbooks) instead of elaborating on its role in relation to different practices. Hence the interview schedule for semi-structured interviews was key in gathering relevant and new, unexpected concepts and idea (Bryman, 2008). Interviews were audio-recorded in order to effectively capture and transcribe the interview data, and that helped me as an interviewer to effectively listen and follow up new ideas, something that could have been lost during notetaking (Esterberg, 2002; Yin, 2014). The details of transcription and data management will be discussed in the sections to follow. A review of documents was also supported alongside interview data.

The documents selected for this research take the form of pre-existing textual data or secondary data, hard and/or soft copies of research reports and training manuals, online newspaper articles, and government policy documents and orders. These primary documentary sources were fundamental in terms of obtaining further details about the key elements or significant events mentioned by the interview participants, thereby

triangulating key information. For instance, newspaper articles helped me develop the timeline of the implementation of ABL, dates which were different in the context of Chennai, and of Puducherry. At times, the documentary evidence was hard to access (Braun and Clarke, 2013; Flick, 2015) due to poor record-keeping and storage issues. This was the case in Puducherry. I could not gain access to the ABL related documents such as training manuals, as the participants mentioned that the ABL material had been either lost or that they were unaware of its storage location, as the practice had declined over 6 years prior to the interviews[39]. On the other hand, access to documents related to SABL rather than to ABL was easier to locate in the case of Chennai since the method was still being implemented. Although general access to physical documents at both sites was difficult, its implications on the quality of data was limited since the focus was not to conduct a documentary analysis but to use the documentary information to corroborate key timelines and facts emerging from the interviews.

As this study uses semi-structured interviews in gathering data that relates to events and experiences that have occurred in the past, particularly in the case of Puducherry, due to the retrospective aspect of interviews there is the possibility of participants having mis-remembered information in relation to facts, or having constructed self-serving memories (Golden, 1992). However, such retrospective interpretation along with evidence from relevant documents is necessary in order to understand the "process by which institutions emerge, maintain and erode" (Suddaby and Greenwood, 2009, p.183). The potential limitations of retrospective accounts are addressed by gathering multiple stakeholder perspectives (teachers, head-teachers, trainers and officials) (Fitzgerald and Dopson, 2009) and data triangulation (Merriam, 1988; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016) that provided a more comprehensive understanding of the shared meanings in relation ABL. Given the focus is on shared understanding, common meanings and interpretations were gathered across the sample in attempts to provide a representational view of the practice of ABL. Interview data was supported with other documentary evidence that helped clarify certain key facts.

3.5. Approach to analysis

Generating transcripts and cleaning the data are considered initial steps to analysis and are discussed below. This is followed by a section highlighting the iterative approach between the literature and the data, as data analysis was carried out.

[39] ABL practice declined by 2012 and attempts to access ABL material were made during data collection period (March- April 2018). I asked all interview participants for any ABL related material but none of them had stored it (they had thrown away material).

3.5.1. Data management

The audio-recorded interviews were stored in a password-protected folder on a secure University of Bristol server. Interviews were transcribed in order to re-present raw data in an analytically focused manner and also feature as a part of the data analysis (Gibson and Brown, 2009). However, since the data collected was bi-lingual i.e. Tamil and/or English, the interviews had to be translated; a process that had its own set of issues and drawbacks. Due to time constraints and language barriers[40], I decided to translate and transcribe all the interviews into English and outsourced this task to a translation services firm[41] in Chennai. After explaining the research project and context to the team of translators, I signed a confidentiality agreement with the firm (see appendix 6). The names of the participants were edited from the audio files in order to maintain the anonymity of the participants before being sent for translation, thereby aligning with the research ethical expectations.

The translators were expected to translate data word for word i.e. verbatim including pauses and emotions in order to maintain the richness of the data and attempt to maintain accuracy in representing the participants' views in another language i.e. English (Regmi et al., 2010). Besides capturing the meaning of the data, an orthographic transcript style that focused on transcribing "spoken words (and other sounds) in recorded data" (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p.162) was followed[42] (see appendix 7). As there were different individuals carrying out this process, I spent a considerable amount of time checking these transcripts (alongside the audio recordings) to correct errors, eliminate discrepancies and ensure consistency was maintained across all the transcripts. Therefore, by outsourcing the translation and transcribing process, my research attempts to maintain accuracy within this process as it was first carried out by an external team of translators, and I later checked them in detail (Ercikan, 1998; Regmi et al., 2010). As this was a rather time-consuming process, 3 months (see Figure 3.11) were invested in not only producing the quality transcripts, but the process also served as an opportunity to actively engage and familiarize myself with the data. As this was the early stages of the analysis, this was expressed through recording annotations/ notes on analytical ideas, and by writing memos in relation to probable themes (Braun and Clarke, 2013). This preliminary analysis leads on to the core analysis of the data, that is discussed below.

[40] I can fluently speak and understand Tamil but cannot read and write the language

[41] Only bilingual and Tamil interviews were sent to the team. Out of the 48 interviews, 2 interviews were not due to sensitivity of information and hence were personally transcribed

[42]The non-semantic aspects such as pauses, overlaps, laughs although captured are not as significant as the main data, since the focus of the analysis is based on other aspects of practices

3.5.2. Development of analysis: An iterative approach

Since the ABL method was going to decline in Chennai, this change in the context highlighted an existing limitation in theoretical framework I had initially chosen. As mentioned on pg.18, the institutionalisation models do not discuss the change post-institutionalisation. While checking the interview transcripts and gathering supporting documents, I simultaneously engaged with the institutional theory literature in search of other theoretical perspective to explore these changes to ABL. During this re-engagement with the literature, I delved deeper into the concept of institutional work- different forms of purposive actions (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006), realising that this could provide a comprehensive perspective of institutional change and the institution of ABL i.e. it might enable me to explore different forms of practices or purposive actions such as training, monitoring that helped create, maintain and disrupt ABL. This link to the literature was superficially based on the notes and memos I had developed as I transcribed, and checked the translations of the interviews. For instance, notes identified different practices of teachers such as sitting on the floor, teaching style, assessments that contributed to the unfolding of ABL in classrooms. Having established this connection between the data and institutional work perspective, I began coding the data.

In order to make sense of the voluminous data generated from the interviews, coding that refers to the process of identifying and labelling elements of the data as categories or codes as the first level of analysis is carried out (Braun and Clarke, 2013; Creswell, 2007). It was done with the assistance of NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software that served as a useful filing system for numerous codes generated from the transcripts (Braun and Clarke, 2013). The software was used to systematically record and file the annotations and memos developed during the transcription, and avoid the laborious process of hand-coding (Creswell, 2013). Given that there are various types of coding used within qualitative research (Saldana, 2013), I will briefly illustrate the coding process adopted. Initial or open coding was carried out by developing concepts or labels for data (in small chunks i.e. 2-3 lines of data) (Urquhart, 2013). It helped flesh out key features of the data, adding valuable descriptions that would point out the direction for further analysis (Charmaz, 2008). Being an inductive study, the open coding develops data-driven codes rather than imposing theoretical interpretations on the data (this is done through pattern coding- discussed below) for the entire data set. Examples of these first order, empirical codes include *stool and mats, managing 6 groups, and lack of respect during inspections*. As the case of Chennai had more data and based on the probability of generating a variety of codes, the initial coding was completed for interviews in Chennai, followed by those from Puducherry.

Once open coding had been completed, a case summary (based on a timeline) of ABL in the context of Chennai and of Puducherry was prepared, in order to provide an overview of the key areas of interest that could be further explored (Harding, 2013). While reflecting on the summaries, the data seemed to cover

key aspects of ABL in terms of practices such as training, classroom activities and monitoring from which two prominent features emerged: One, the codes in relation to these practices were categorised in relation to different forms of institutional work. For instance, the training of teachers in ABL as a practice was related to the *creating* category of institutional work. Two, on an abstract level, these practices of ABL were a combination of different elements: individual's interpretations in relation to the practice, what they were expected to do within it (skills required), and the material that was involved. In particular, materiality emerged as a key difference between the two contexts and served as a possible explanatory lens for the decline of ABL in Puducherry. As various different practices seemed to be crucial for the emergence and transformation of ABL, exploring the nature of these practices seemed an interesting area for many reasons: the sociology of practice was one of the tenets of institutional work (as discussed in on pg. 33) which served to open the 'black-box' of institutions, and was a viable approach to an exploration of the role of materiality within institutional work; both aspects have generated interest amongst institutional theorists. In exploring the different theoretical perspectives that existed within the practice theory literature, such as Schatzki, or Giddens, I sought a framework that would serve as an analytical tool to methodically present the elements of the key ABL practices. While reviewing the different frameworks within the practice literature and simultaneously categorising the data in relation to forms of institutional work, I particularly explored in depth Shove's three-element framework that discussed how practice emerged, was sustained, and disappeared, based on the links between the three elements- *meaning, material and competence.* This three-element framework was a useful analytical toolkit to present the data that constituted the different practice of ABL.

In order to re-organise the data based on elements of this framework, pattern coding or super coding, as a second-level coding, was adopted in order to bring together the relationship between the codes (Gibson and Brown, 2009; Saldana, 2013). Thus, the initial codes that emerged from the open coding could be interrelated in a conceptually different way (Punch, 2009). For example, the learning cards, table and chairs, and learning ladder identified within each practice were classified as *materials*. It is important to note that although open and pattern coding formed key aspects of grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2006), within this research they were adopted in order to develop core themes, in relation to the thematic analysis that was adopted for this research.

As mentioned in section 3.2.3, a flexible approach to thematic analysis was adopted in order to highlight the similarities, difference and relationship between the categories of data (Gibson and Brown, 2009). The different elements identified through pattern coding (meaning, material and competence) are related to each other to form a practice which constituted a theme. Since the focus of this research is to understand the unfolding of institutional change through daily practices (i.e. institutional work) in two distinct contexts,

themes developed through cross-case analysis will provide a deeper understanding and help explain the similarities and differences in terms of ABL implementation in the context of Chennai, and of Puducherry. So, the themes that were initially identified as practices of ABL were categorised as key practices that contributed to creating, maintaining and disrupting the ABL practice. The approach to coding and analysis discussed above is diagrammatically illustrated in Figure 3.12 with practice related to the teacher's position, seen below. This theme development will be further elaborated through practice related to training in section 4.1.1 in Chapter 4.

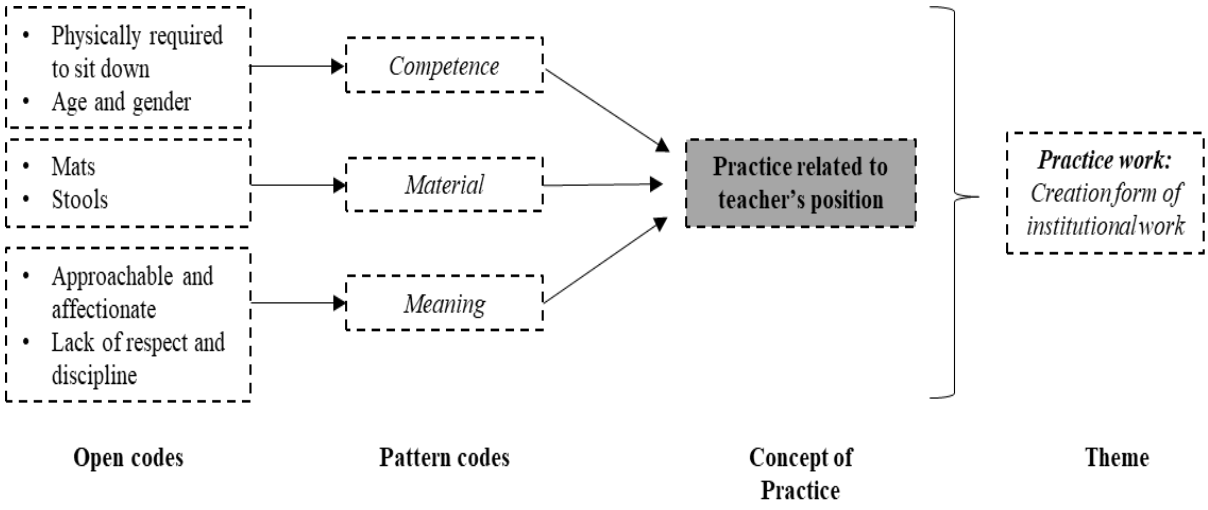

Figure 3.12: Illustration of theme development

3.6. Ethical considerations

As qualitative research involves obtaining an understanding of participants' experiences of a phenomena, it is paramount that such data is obtained and analysed in an ethical manner (Braun and Clarke, 2013). My trustworthiness as a researcher is depicted through the ethical practices adopted for this research and impacts the credibility of this study (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). Ethical approval (see Appendix 8) for this research was granted by the Ethics Committee of the School of Economics, Finance and Management, at the University of Bristol in January 2017, and was extended until May 2018 for data collection for the exploratory, and the main study. Other key ethical practices relevant for research, such as informed consent and the privacy of participants, were maintained through the course of data collection (Esterberg, 2002). I asked participants to read and sign the statement of informed consent before conducting and recording interviews, and the interviewees were also allowed to discontinue interviews without giving any reason. The confidentiality and anonymity of participants were of prime importance for this research as it assisted the participants in discussing their experiences and opinions of ABL in a safe environment. Therefore, suitable measures were taken at different data management stages; the personal details of the participants

were edited from the audio files before they were sent to translators, and pseudonyms were assigned to all participants that enabled an anonymised reporting of the findings.

3.7. Summary

Overall, this Chapter has positioned this research within a relativist and social constructionist worldview and has provided the rationale for a case study methodology that adopted a comparative and interpretive lens to the address of the research questions. Given the significance of the cultural, political, and geographical location of this research, the context of Indian education (particularly primary education) and the pedagogical practices within which ABL is situated have been discussed. Being a comparative study, the context and justification for exploring ABL in the contexts of Chennai and of Puducherry were also presented. The practical details of doing fieldwork have also been elaborated on, and the emergent nature of the study was highlighted through the discussion of the exploratory study and how it supported approaches adopted within the main study. Approaches to transcription have been presented, followed by a discussion that highlight the iterative nature of research. It describes how the analysis evolved and was developed through the iterative process between the data and the literature, a process that led to the adoption of the three-element theoretical framework. The Chapter concludes with various ethical practices that were maintained within this research. The next two Chapters present the empirical findings of this research.

Chapter 4 MICRO-DYNAMICS OF INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

The purpose of this chapter is to answer the first research sub-question: *'How can the three-element practice framework contribute to the understanding of the micro-dynamics of institutional change?'* Institutional change that occurs through the replacement of one dominant institutional logic (a meaning framework that guides behaviour) over another logic is carried out through institutional work i.e. practices. Shove et al's (2012) three-element (meaning, material and competence) framework is adopted in order to foreground the elements that constitute these practice-based institutional works and thereby demonstrate the dynamic nature of institutional change. The framework and empirical data will highlight the dynamic nature of the practice through two aspects: one is through the links between the elements (meaning, material and competence) and the second is by adopting Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) temporal dimensions of agency to exhibit the variation in the meaning element of practice. Agency which is considered as a temporal social engagement is relational in this context and can be found in varying degrees in a given moment with one or another of these dimensions might predominate. As stated on pg. 31 in Chapter 2, I draw on this internal perspective of agency to highlight how practitioners draw on different interpretations within the practice and the implications of these dimensions of agency are stated under the meaning element of each practice.

Within this empirical work, replacing the teacher-centred logic with learner-centred logic is explored through five different practices that contribute to creating and maintaining the institution of ABL in the context of Chennai and Puducherry. Training as a supporting practice, and monitoring as an enabling practice, are discussed in relation to how they contribute towards the three key sub-practices of that together constitute the ABL method i.e. teacher's position, teaching style and assessment practices. These five practices are discussed as forms of institutional work that are identified in terms of how they contribute to creating and maintaining the institution of ABL. Three sub-practices of ABL are analysed in relation to sub-practices within the traditional method in order to highlight the resistance to change in practice. Throughout this chapter, all participants are given pseudonyms. I will first illustrate in-depth how the three elements (competence, material and meaning) are defined within this chapter through the practice related to training in Chennai. Thereafter, the presentation and discussion of these three elements will vary amongst the remaining four practices. Overall this chapter discusses nature and elements that constitute the different practice-based institutional works that lead to the unfolding of institutional change.

4.1. Practice related to training

The training practice highlights the participants initial training experience of ABL as they were expected understand and develop various competences in relation to the pedagogy. These experiences are explored through the different elements of practice-meaning, material and competence.

4.1.1. Chennai

Competence

Shove et al. (2012) conceptualize competence as practical knowledge and understanding required to perform a practice. These skills give practitioners a sense of how to use relevant material within the practice and also develop appropriate interpretation towards the practice. Therefore, these competences are crucial for successful enactment of a practice (Spotswood et al., 2015) and are identified as a characteristic of the practice rather than the practitioners (Reckwitz, 2002). As discussed on pg. 51, these skills can be acquired by the practitioner through training or education (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006) that entail the process of abstracting concepts that are decoded and reversed through training (Shove et al., 2012). These skills are also transformed over time through the performance of practice. Acquiring and enacting new competences requires practitioner's effort which also serves as a key element of institutional work (Lawrence et al., 2009b) and is identified as part of the competence element of practice. The section below highlights the various competences the ABL teachers were expected to learn at training. Subsequently, the nature of these competences will be discussed further in relation to the three sub-practices of ABL and within monitoring practice.

As a practitioner of the ABL practice, teachers were expected to learn how to use the key ABL material in the classroom i.e. learning cards and a learning ladder. Given that the learning cards were identified by their respective logos, teachers needed to remember which logo represented which activity as mentioned by Padmini

> *... those logos we have to keep it in our mind. If this is the logo mean this is the activity… like that each one we understood.*

This was particularly difficult as there were different sets of logos for each subject e.g. logos of vehicles such as ship, aeroplanes, cars were used in English; birds for science (The Chennai Corporation, 2007; UNICEF, 2012). Once they understood the relationship between the logos/learning cards and activities, teachers also needed to understand how these materials related to the learning ladder. The cards were sequentially arranged on the ladder based on the competences, and teachers were expected to understand and follow this sequence. This was crucial, as teachers were expected to teach the students by ensuring that the *students pick the correct card based on the ladder number and get the card back to teacher* (Selvi). But

before training the children, Kavitha emphasised it was important for teachers to develop a foundation in the workings of ABL.

> *Firstly, for us itself, if it is this logo what activity should they do, we should understand right? Only if we are clear in that, can we teach the children.*

Therefore, a strong understanding of the ABL material was crucial for teachers who were then expected to train the students in the classroom. Bearing in mind the significance of laying the foundation for students regarding ABL material, this was essential before the students could begin to learn with the material. As a result, the teachers were expected to teach the students how to learn through this new method within the first 2 months of the new academic year. Madhu described this below

> *during the training itself they told us, 'for about 6 weeks you introduce the logo, then how to go in the ladder,' all that alone, if you train the students it is enough*

Besides teaching the children the functions of these materials, teachers were required to ensure that each student progressed through this learning material, and also through the 6 groups that existed in the ABL classroom. So, the teachers were expected to know the allocation of the learning cards to the groups in the classroom, and then needed to teach their students to sit in the right group with the right card, as stated by Indra

> *how to handle children, how to take the card, how to go to the group … I myself will put the group card, I myself will take the card …'Oh when this card comes I have to go to this group'…*

Besides being trained to work with the ABL material and manage the groups, teachers were required to sit on the floor and teach the children. Keeping this in mind, the participants were trained by sitting on the floor with their students while working with the relevant material. Murali mentioned this as he recollected his training experience

> *When they gave us training itself, in the beginning, like children, we will sit on the floor on the mats.*

These competences that the teachers were expected to develop during training were indeed a contrast to the competences that teachers had or were expected to have before ABL. In order to support this, the participants were supported with regular material (physical and visual material) during training. This is discussed in the section below.

Material

Materials include "objects, infrastructure, tools, hardware and the body itself" (Shove et al., 2012, p.23). As mentioned in the section above, the competences that practitioner acquire and develop relate to use of materials within the practice and therefore, in this research, materials is an element that constitutes the practice instead of serving as a supportive arrangement. In this chapter, the role of material (particularly in terms of access to the material) within practices is underscored in terms of how it contributes to the process of institutional change (through practice-based institutional work) based on the proposition that materials are carriers of institutional logics (Jones et al., 2017). Materials within this chapter refer to different forms of teaching-learning material in the traditional and ABL method and also states their significance in practice related to training and monitoring. In addition to physical objects, other non-tangible material aspects that were part of ABL training such as school visit to observe ABL classroom and ABL videos shown to practitioners were also included within this element. This conceptualisation of observations as a material element is based on the premise that materiality and space constitute the practice, thereby are a facet of the social reality (Monteiro and Nicolini, 2015). The material aspects of training are presented below.

The teachers during the training sessions of ABL worked with copies of the relevant material i.e. learning cards and the learning ladder. However, Indra reflected on how there *were no cards* during the initial training period, and they used *A4 paper* which could tear easily. The learning cards for training were later printed as training became widespread. Besides learning through training material, teachers were taken to ABL model schools[43] in order to obtain a visual understanding of how teachers taught students with relevant material within a classroom setting. Saraswathi highlighted the role of the school visits

> *…We will take them and show practically… in the field what they are doing, what the children are doing…*

Through these observations, teachers were able *to clarify any doubts* they previously had during training (with the trainers) which helped them implement ABL with more clarity (Anitha). So, as teachers observed the ABL classrooms in the schools they visited, *they understood their role* (Uma) which therefore provided additional understanding for teachers. The significance of these observations was re-iterated by Shruthi

> *So, taking in person and only if we see it will we know.*

As an alternative to these observations of ABL classroom through school visits, teachers were shown video clips of how relevant ABL materials (learning cards and ladder) were used in the original setting i.e. Rishi

[43] During the initial stages of implementation of ABL in Chennai, 13 model schools were set up to roll out the practice (as mentioned in context). These model schools were crucial as teachers from other schools in the city visited them during the roll out phase of ABL for Chennai

Valley schools from where the ABL system was adopted. Bhavani stated that video clips of *how they are doing it in Rishi Valley* were shown to her during training in order to give them practical understanding of the practice.

Thereby, observation through these school visits and/or watching ABL videos serve as crucial material element of training practice in terms of providing an opportunity for teachers to visually understand the skills they are expected to enact in the classroom setting. It is important to note that not all teachers went on these school trips and in some cases, videos were shown as an alternative. Since the competence (along with an understanding of the relevant material) teachers were required to develop was in contrast with the traditional practice (mentioned in section 3.3.1) this change triggered different interpretations amongst the participants that is discussed in the meaning section below.

Meaning

The element of meaning encompasses different concepts such as emotions, shared understanding and motivational knowledge (Shove et al., 2012). These interpretations emerge in relation to material used or skill exhibited within the practice, thereby making meaning a relational element (Spotswood et al., 2015). As these interpretations are in relation to the practice, like the other two elements- competence and material, these interpretations belong to the practice rather than the practitioner (Reckwitz, 2002). The meaning element brings together various interpretations in terms of emotions, shared understandings, concepts such as control and motivational aspects such as professional commitment drawn by the practitioner. As elaborated on pg. 52, the change in meaning element is highlighted through the process of de-classification and re-classification (Shove et al., 2012) and is highlighted in relation to three-sub practices of ABL within this chapter. In addition, Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) temporal dimension of agency serve as an analytical tool to understand if/how such interpretations may have an impact on the links between the three elements and further implications in terms of emergence, sustenance and disruption of practice at a given moment of time. The section below exhibits the practitioner's interpretations in relation to ABL training.

As Indra narrated their training experience of having to develop rather unique competences to use different material (which were rather limited during training), she described their inability to understand the workings of ABL with the phrase given below

> *Yes, when the trainers were saying without anything (material).. it was like* ***'Tying our eyes and leaving you in the forest!'*** *...we never understood anything.*

This phrase of '*tying our eyes and leaving you in the forest*' is used to express the sense of anxiety and feeling lost as they went through ABL training and is also featured in the case of Puducherry. The phrase

also represented the lack of vision (expressed through tied eyes) for participants which caused them a great amount of distress as they were expected to understand the ABL practice (which is associated with the forest). Indra went on to say that when the relevant ABL material (learning cards and ladder) were provided, a sense of understanding emerged that indicated a strong material- meaning link in relation to the training practice. Besides this phrase used to illustrate Indra's ABL training experience, other participants described their experience of training for ABL through emotions such as difficulty, doubt and fear.

Madhu expressed their difficulty in learning the ABL method as teachers were required to have the necessary skills to guide students through the *learning cards, after introducing logos* while managing them in the groups. Given this difficulty experienced at training itself, Jyothi in the statement below indicated their doubt and concern in terms of the practicality of implementing ABL in the classroom, and trying to get parents and students on board

> *'Aiyo! Training itself is like this, how are we going to take it to school and what are we going to do? How do we move it with parents? How will we move it with students?*

Besides a sense of doubt, there was a sense of worry and fear that is expressed through the word 'Aiyo!'[44]. Preethi below also expressed this sense of fear in doing ABL and interestingly associated this fear with the fact that it was a change from the long-established traditional teaching practice.

> *ABL means…. (we) went with a lot of fear. Because so many years, we will come through the Chalk and talk method.*

Preethi also highlighted the duration of the *'chalk and talk method'* (traditional practice) that existed for '*so many years*' which was also stated in section 3.3.1. The existence and impact of the traditional practice were stressed by Jyothi who mentioned how teachers were *soaked in a methodology for 100 years!* and goes on to state that a change in the practice from traditional to ABL was met with fear, doubt and initial resistance. While discussing teachers' acceptance of ABL during training, Murali highlighted that as teachers *studied in the traditional method,* they were inclined to *teach the children with the books.* As the practice was changed from traditional to ABL, Murali mentioned teacher's *difficulty to accept the new method.* Therefore, the fear and doubts are rooted in their prior experience of the traditional methodology as a student themselves before they became a practitioner of that same traditional method. As the traditional method was the dominant pedagogical practice in schools, a change to this routine was met with initial

[44] Being a Tamil word, there is no literal translation for it in English. It can be associated with the English phrase 'Oh No!'

resistance. Besides a change being brought to long-standing practice, the nature of the change in the method was also crucial.

Participants couldn't comprehend the requisites of the ABL method given it was in marked contrast to the traditional method which was discussed in the competence section above. Padmini explained below this lack of understanding through the drastic change in material i.e. books (traditional) to cards (ABL)

> *What card is this? What playing?'... I did not understand. After handling books there, immediately when I came here, I didn't know.*

Therefore, this lack of understanding that was expressed through doubts and fear was a result of changing a norm like status associated to teaching-learning practices, and the nature of this change was radical in terms of teachers having to develop different competences (work with the children in groups, sit on the floor, teach their students to use the ABL material), and teachers being required to learn and work with different teaching material (learning cards, and the ladder).

Despite the initial resistance and concerns associated with this change, some participants positively expressed their desire to implement ABL practice. While reflecting on how different ABL was to the traditional practice, Jayashree expressed below her curiosity to work with it.

> *With an interest. That is how I saw it. 'What is it? Let us see.. we will try and teach!'*

This intent to work with ABL also stemmed from the teacher's sense of duty towards their job and is reflected in Bhavani's statement

> *'We will get down/ get into it and see!' why means, we should face everything! Being a teacher, we should not say 'I cannot do this!' ... that is my opinion.*

The statement above also draws an association to the teacher's limited agency (reflected in the statement *we should not say 'I cannot this do')* within their role as a teacher. This limited agency for teachers seemed to stem from the role as a government teacher who considered it their *duty to follow government order* which was reflected in the teacher *following the methodology, they (the government) tell* (Selvi). Besides professional commitment there is also a sense of forced regulation with regard to implementing ABL. As participants narrated their training experience of ABL, in reflecting on how they came to implement it, besides expressing their professional commitment, many of them stated their limited autonomy as a government teacher. This was reflected in Ananya's statement

> *Actually, there was no other way, (laughs)we accepted the method.*

Besides the rather strong regulatory element that was supposed to have led teachers to *accept* the ABL practice, Pooja highlighted the consequences of being reprimanded (via memo) for not implementing ABL

> *If you do not do then … we will give you memo, give you this and that …So, we have to do it… there is no other go.*

To conclude, participants seemed to indicate that they had limited agency to challenge the implementation of the ABL practice due to their professional commitment and also the repercussions of challenging the regulation. In terms of meaning, negative interpretations such as the lack of understanding of ABL expressed through fear and doubts due to participant's previous understanding of pedagogical practices and positive interpretations such as willingness and professional commitment were drawn by the participant. Underlying regulation seemed to play a crucial role in their working with the ABL practice in school and is further explored in section 4.5.1.

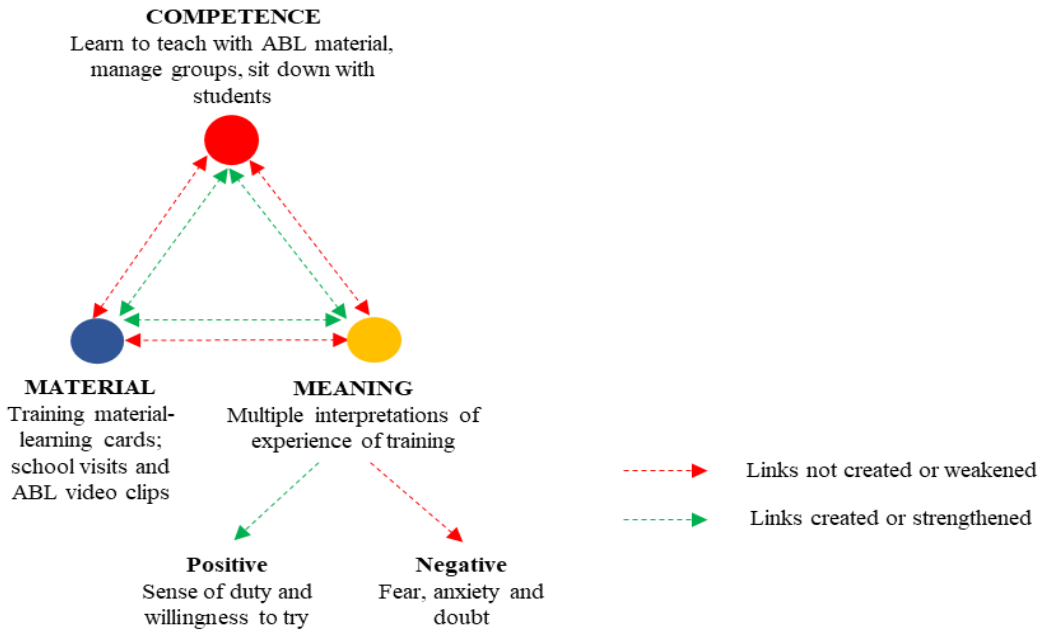

Figure 4.1: Practice related to training: Chennai

Through the practice of training as depicted in Figure 4.1, as the practitioner was engaged in acquiring different competences through the supportive material, they drew upon multiple negative (fear, anxiety and doubt) as well as positive interpretations (willing to try, sense of duty) in relation to this practice. The negative meanings expressed by the participant may be attributed to the functioning of **iterative dimension of agency** (past) as the individuals were engaged with past patterns of thought and action (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998) in relation to competences and material with traditional methods of teaching, and as a result

they then felt fear and anxiety towards the competences and materials of ABL. Also, the lack of material contributed to the initial limited sense of understanding, suggesting that the material had a crucial role in the process of educating practitioners. Because of these negative meanings, the links between the elements (*material, meaning* and *competence*) may have weakened (red arrow in Figure 4.1) resulting in the practitioner's resistance to learning the ABL method. On the other hand, the positive meanings such as interest in learning ABL may have stemmed from the functioning of **projective agency** in which practitioners focus on future desires and hopes (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998) that led to their willingness to learn and train under the ABL method. This agency may have supported the links between the three elements (green arrow in Figure 4.1) and that may have resulted in individuals positively engaging with the ABL training. However, besides the positive and negative meanings, there was an underlying regulation which was reflected through both the professional commitment and the limited agency of each participant. This may have appeared due to the functioning of **practical-evaluative agency** (present), where the individual made decisions amongst the presence of different alternatives (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998) (i.e. obeying rules of government or needing to face the consequences of any violation of the rules).The presence of this dimension of agency may have also enabled the emergence of this practice of training. The next section discusses the practice of training in the case of Puducherry in a similar fashion.

4.1.2. Puducherry

The participants of Puducherry discussed their training experience of ABL in manner similar to those of Chennai. Given the similarity, the key aspects of the three elements are presented below.

Competence

Table 4.1 exhibits the ABL competences participants were expected to develop during training

Competence	Data excerpt
Remember functions of learning material	*So many cards are there, the ladder is there, and we need to remember this* (Priya)
Acquire knowledge of learning material	*(I) should make the child understand, so first I have to be a good student. Then only I can teach my child.* (Roopa)
Required to get students to study with material	*We never knew how the children would cope up with this method. The child has to see the logo, I am in this logo and I need to take this card… to that extent, whether they will come we were doubtful (*Jaya)
Required to sit down	*We have to put pai (mat) and sit down. Aiyo!* (Roopa)

Table 4.1: ABL competences to be acquired during training: Puducherry

As exhibited in the case of Chennai, participants in the case of Puducherry stated the need to remember the different learning material and develop strong understanding of material so that they could effectively get students to work with the ABL material. As Roopa expressed her worry about sitting on the floor (exhibited through the word '*Aiyo'),* this competence of sitting on the floor was particularly difficult for older teachers and will be discussed as a separate sub-practice of ABL in section 4.2. Besides sitting on the floor with their students, teachers had to teach the students who were split into 6 groups in the classroom. Keerthi while describing the requirement of having *to divide the children into 6 groups,* expressed her concerns about the children's ability to pay attention when they were spread across these groups in the classrooms. This classroom management competence of dealing with students in groups is further discussed in section 4.3, practice related to teaching style. Therefore, developing the competences of learning and working with different teaching-learning material and also managing a differently organised classroom (working with students on the floor within groups) seemed to be challenging for teachers. The material element of this practice is discussed, and this sub-section will conclude with the meaning element of practice.

Material

The teachers were trained with the relevant ABL material i.e. learning cards and ladder. As in the case of Chennai, videos of ABL classrooms in schools in Tamil Nadu and school visits to observe ABL classrooms were also key material aspects of training as exhibited in Table 4.2

Material	Data excerpt
ABL videos	*How to divide the groups in the class … how to make children sit, how to read logos, how to arrange the trays… I just watched the videos of that.* (Keerthi)
Interactions during school visits	*from Puducherry in 3 buses, we took 3 groups of teachers … how the teachers are taking there… live situation …our teachers itself checked. Our teachers asked those children to study/read…* (Ram)

Table 4.2: Material used during training: Puducherry

Keerthi's statement above indicated how the videos provided a strong visual and practical understanding of how the different competences that the teachers developed in training could be applied in the classroom. Besides these videos, some of the participants stated that they had visited ABL schools in different parts of Tamil Nadu as part of their training (SSA, 2009); this also provided another form of visual understanding of ABL as indicated in Ram's statement in Table 4.2. These school visits gave teachers an opportunity to put into context the different competences they were expected to develop during training and visually

explore and understand how ABL was rolled out in the classroom. The significance of school visits was described by Swetha below

> *I felt it was good, there was a lot of difference between giving us training and seeing it practically. To a certain extent we started to understand…we asked the teachers how to do this, that … they started teaching us…*

Overall, as in the case of Chennai, the ABL videos and interactions during schools contributed to participant's understanding of ABL within the training practice.

Meaning

As highlighted in the case of Chennai, participants expressed different emotions and interpretations as they reflected on their initial training experience of ABL. Jaya expressed her inability to cope and understand the ABL practice (during training) with the phrase below

> *First 5 days itself it was like '**tying our eyes and leaving us in the forest'**. We did not understand anything. Because lot of logos were there*

This phrase was also used by Indra on pg.105 when she described her training experience in the case of Chennai. Within this context, the phrase signified the participants' sense of feeling lost (*tying our eyes)* while attempting to learn the workings of ABL and was common across both sites. Besides the feeling of being lost*,* other participants stated a general lack of understanding and the training experience triggered different emotion such as doubt, fear and anxiety; a response that was similar to Chennai.

Swetha stated the she *didn't understand at all* as the trainers discussed the role of *learning card, logo and ladder* and therefore didn't *get any clarity.* Priya who mentioned the need to recollect the functions of different learning materials (see Table 4.1) ultimately caused her to doubt the her abilities and of others to implement the ABL practice.

> *Will I be able to do this? Will the teachers be able to do this.. all those doubts we had*

The underlying reason for these emotions amongst participants was due to their previously shared understanding of the traditional teaching-learning practices and given that *ABL was opposite to the traditional teaching methods* (Govind). As in the case of Chennai, participants in Puducherry were educated through traditional practices and therefore struggled to grasp an understanding of the workings of ABL. This was expressed by Raji

> *But when I first attended training, I didn't understand anything. What is .. they will give card, they will read … because until now, since the time I have studied, the teacher will teach from the book, that we will study.*

Besides the participants coming with knowledge of the traditional method (or teacher-centred logic) and ABL (as learner-centred logic) being distinctly different from the traditional method, training highlighted that participants who had experienced these traditional practices for a considerable period particularly found it difficult to adapt to the change. Vijay expressed this resistance to change with reference to individuals who had many years of teaching experience

> *They were experienced 10-20 years, they are senior people, those who were almost in the traditional way of lecture method; all of a sudden, they have to change it that was bit difficult.*

This resistance to change seemed to be less of an issue for teachers who had fewer years of teaching experience. Rani described below the transition from teacher-centred logic to learner-centred logic as being 'good' and draws an association between being young and willing to try something new. This is exhibited below

> *… As we are all young and energetic, this is new, this is learner-centred like that, to try something new is a something we like to do. So, it was not a big deal for us*

The willingness to implement the ABL practice was also expressed by Viji as she was told that it would improve the quality of education of the students

> *why don't (we) implement it and see… since they said it will improve the quality of education in children, I thought of giving it a try*.

Particularly the participant's willingness to work with the ABL practice was also supported by ABL's success in Tamil Nadu. This was stated by Rani below

> *But as this (system) was successful in Tamil Nadu and the children were doing well, we thought of giving it a try*.

The outcome of children doing well in ABL classrooms in Tamil Nadu was witnessed by some participants as they visited schools in Tamil Nadu who were practising ABL. Overall, similar to the case of Chennai, participants experienced negative interpretations in terms of lack of understanding, fear and doubt during ABL training particularly since their past experiences and training were rooted in teacher centred methods. On the other hand, positive interpretations in terms of willingness to try and perceived benefits to improve

student's quality of education coupled with ABL's success in Tamil Nadu were also present amongst participants.

In summary, similar to the case of Chennai, teachers underwent training in order to learn to understand the workings of the ABL method through the respective competences and materials. Practitioners again drew on their multiple negative interpretations (such lack of understanding, doubt, fear and resistance to change) together with their positive interpretations (willingness to try; to improve quality of education). As described in the case of Chennai, the negative interpretations could be associated with the functioning of the past-oriented **iterative agency**, while positive interpretations could be attributed to the operation of a future-oriented **projective agency** (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). However, there seemed to be a stronger regulatory presence in the case of Chennai exhibited through practical-evaluative agency which wasn't the case in Puducherry. These aspects of regulation and control will be further discussed in section 4.5. This practice of training resembles an "educating" form of institutional work where individuals learn the required skills that supports the creation of institutions i.e. ABL (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). Besides training practitioners to develop the necessary skills and understanding required to implement ABL, my empirical findings highlight how material aspects of training such as ABL material, school visits and video clips were also crucial within this form of institutional work and will be discussed in section 6.1.1.

I will now proceed to discuss the three sub-practices of ABL (teacher's position, teaching style and assessment practice) and highlight how the change from teacher-centred logic to learning centred-logic (institutional change) unfolds through the shift from traditional to ABL sub-practices. Since the traditional method was similar in the context of Chennai and Puducherry, data will be combined and presented together by source, with each clearly stated as C-Chennai and P-Puducherry; whereas in the case of ABL, the sub-practices are presented separately for Chennai and Puducherry.

4.2. Practice related to teacher's position

4.2.1. Teacher's position in the traditional method

In the traditional practice, the teacher is positioned in front of the classroom, supported with table and chair and is perceived in a certain manner. This is discussed through the respective practice elements-competence, material and meaning

In terms of **competence**, the teacher was required *to stand* in front of the classroom while they taught students (Roopa-P). Given students were seated on the floor (or in some school's benches and tables), the teacher had the flexibility to stand or even *roam around* the class as they taught the students (Madhavi-C). This movement of the teacher was also supported by the fact that students who were usually seated in rows or '*single lines'* (Jyothi-C) and did not move in the classroom. Therefore, the student's position was fixed

in the classroom and their attention was focused on the teacher who either stood in front of them or paced in the classroom. So, teachers believed that they were able to gather the attention of all students in the class, as there was *no movement* of the students (Padmini -C). Besides having the flexibility to move and being visible to all students in the classroom, the teachers in the case of Chennai were required to develop an additional competence since they had implemented the 'Joyful Learning' practice[45]. As a result, teachers were also expected to *sing* and *dance* with students while they taught lessons as it was expected to motivate the students (Preethi-C).

Besides standing or moving around the classroom, the teachers could also teach the students by sitting on the tables and chairs provided in the classroom. As key **materials,** the chairs and tables also maintained a sense of physical distance between the teacher and student as stated by Mahalakshmi (C)

> *If there is a table and desk, then when they approach us with the book, they have to stand opposite to us and face us*

Therefore, there existed a hierarchical relationship between the teacher and students as the teacher was positioned in the front of the classroom, supported by the material aspects of a chair and table. This competence and material aspect of this sub-practice contributed by bringing about different interpretations (**meaning**). For instance, these material objects were perceived to be symbols of the teacher's position and identity in the classroom as illustrated in Jyothi (C) statement

> *Teacher itself means, (they) will sit on the table (and) chair which is near the board! ..... all these days, for years, teachers mean table (and) chair.*

Jyothi (C) also stressed the long-established duration of this association (*for years, teachers mean table chair)* indicating the significance of the material aspect of the teacher's identity in the classroom. Besides the role of materials, the teacher's position was also correlated with different interpretations. While exploring the meanings attributed towards a teacher's position, Viji (P) stated that students were *scared of the teacher* and therefore did not *come that close to the teacher.* Besides symbolising fear in terms of distance from the teacher, Varsha (C) reflected how teachers were being perceived with fear which was exhibited through student discipline

> *Before and all if sir is coming means, if the teacher is 4 houses away we will go in (the classroom).*

The discipline in the statement above is demonstrated by the student going into the classroom and waiting for the teacher even in the absence of the teacher. The intensity of the emotion expressed towards the teacher

[45] As mentioned earlier, Joyful learning was implemented only in the state of Tamil Nadu i.e. Chennai and NOT Puducherry

is exhibited through the students being ready for the teacher in the classroom despite them being '*4 houses away*!'. This goes on to show the underlying fear and respect that was attributed towards the teacher in the traditional practice.

Therefore, in terms of the underlying meaning of this sub-practice, the teacher's identity was based on the material that existed in the classroom (i.e. table and chairs) and was perceived with fear and respect. In terms of bringing the above elements of practice together, the teacher was being perceived with fear and respect (*meaning*) while their identity was supported by the tables and chairs present in the classroom (*material*) and they were positioned in front of the classroom (*competence*- either standing, walking or dancing when required). Essentially, linking all three elements lead to the emergence of positioning the teacher away from the student within the traditional method as depicted in Figure 4.2.

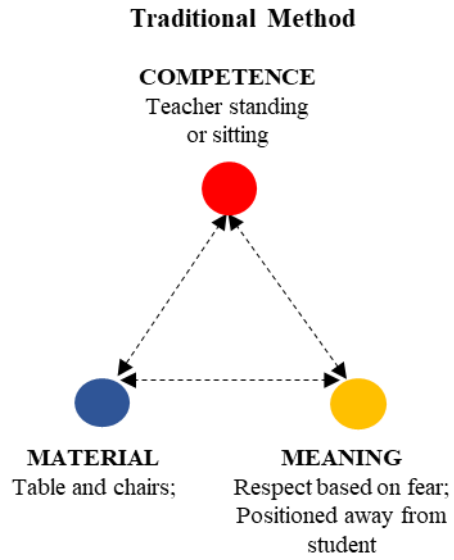

Figure 4.2: Practice related to the teacher's position in the traditional method

As this practice was part of the traditional method that was a dominant pedagogy for a considerable period, it acquired a norm like status as the practitioner was repeatedly engaged in this practice over time. However, with the introduction of ABL, this practice changed to a considerable extent as the distinct elements of the practice changed. This sub practice is discussed separately in the case of Chennai and Puducherry below.

4.2.2. Practice related to teacher's position in ABL: Chennai

The practice of sitting on the floor was crucial to ABL as it aimed to reduce the distance between the teacher and the student. This physical proximity gave teachers the opportunity to provide individual attention to each student and thereby promote quality learning. Each element of this sub-practice is discussed below

Competence

The participants stated that they were required to sit along with students on the floor in ABL classrooms. Given that this practice of sitting on the floor was a contrast to sitting on a chair, some participants did indicate that they had (initial) difficulties. Physical ailments such as such as knee pain or other body pain were common issues mentioned by teachers, due to their age. While reflecting on her own difficulties of sitting down, Padma mentioned how a considerable number of primary school teachers were physically unfit due to these ailments

> *For some teachers they have back pain, all that is there… 85% teachers were unfit for this.*

Besides the age issue, the gender of the teacher seemed to have had an impact on the ability to acquire the required competence. Since only female teachers are appointed for grades one to five in Tamil Nadu (Kannappan et al., 2016), Madhavi illustrated how female related health issues also made it difficult for them to sit on the floor.

> *Most of them have pregnancy, caesarean or some surgery. So, when they do all what happens, they have backbone problem. They keep sitting down and they get pain*

It can be noted that this physical ailment not only came with age but with gender-related concerns i.e. young teachers being pregnant or post-pregnancy issues that put them under strain when they had to sit on the floor. As the female teacher aged, Vaishnavi stated other *health related issue* such as *menopause* made it *physically difficult* for teachers to sit down. Since the sample population for this study was predominantly female as indicated in Table 3.5, these concerns were reflected by most participants. Given that this competency issue was caused by age and gender-related factors was a common concern, it was addressed by giving teachers an option to sit on small stools instead of sitting on the floor. This leads into further material aspects of this sub-practice which is discussed below

Material

Although the ABL classrooms had mats for the students and teachers to sit on, as mentioned above, Saraswathi stated that teacher could *use a tool* that attempted to address the physical ailment issue. Although the stool was offered as an alternative to sitting on the floor, it still required some physical exertion for the teacher. Preethi described how it was difficult to sit on the stool as they were still required to *be equal to the students* and they have to *bend and teach.* As there was physical proximity between the teacher and students that was supported through the competence required and material (mats or stools), there was an underlying meaning that drove this sub practice and is discussed below.

Meaning

Although this practice of sitting down was to ensure teachers could effectively teach their students, positioning the teacher next to students resulted in different interpretations amongst participants. This position of the teacher, which was discussed in terms of physical proximity, is explored in relation to different positive and negative meanings. Jayashree mentioned that this practice resulted in students being more *'affectionate'* towards the teacher. In contrast to this positive meaning, Pooja stated that *'children had no respect since we are sitting with them'* indicating that it resulted in negative meanings amongst the participants. Table 4.3 exhibits some of the positive and negative interpretations associated with this practice

Positive interpretations	**Data extracts**
Approachable	*A teacher means fear, that has gone and they feel that the teacher will tell anything we ask them, they will do anything we ask them..* - Madhu
Affection- maternal value	*Yes, when we sit together with them on the ground, they feel like mother's care*- Lakshmi
Negative interpretations	**Data extracts**
Lack of respect	*Since we sit on the floor definitely there is no respect for the teachers. Because when they see us, they'll think that the teachers also sitting with us equally* - Preethi
Lack of discipline	*...But there is no discipline because we sit together with them… we became their friend*- Mahalakshmi

Table 4.3: Positive and negative interpretations associated with sitting on the floor: Chennai

With respect to positive meanings, in terms of being approachable and affectionate, the interpretation emerged as participants recollected the benefits of sitting down with their students through various illustrations that depicted the student's willingness to learn (Madhu). This interpretation could be attributed to the function of the **projective dimension of agency** in which participants have re-configured their schemas to a different set of interpretations oriented towards the future (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998) i.e. transition from fear of teachers to affection for teachers and as a result may have enabled emergence of this practice.

On the other hand, participants also interpreted the practice of sitting down (competence-material) with students as resulting in a lack of student discipline and respect for teachers (meaning). These participants indicated that since the students saw them as their 'equal' (Preethi) or *their friend* (Mahalakshmi) it resulted in lack of respect. This may suggest that their respect as a teacher comes from being a non-equal to the student or in other words is based on the hierarchical, distance-based relationship that had previously existed. These participants who attribute a negative meaning to the practice seemed to interpret through an

iterative dimension of agency as they continued to draw on previously taken-for-granted schemes (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998), an interpretation indicating resistance to change in practice. Interpretations of respect being the over-arching aspect in relation to this practice may be derived through lack of discipline/respect (iterative agency) or affection (projective agency), depending on which factors dominate at any given moment of time. This is reflected in Lakshmi's statement

Out of fear the respect might come, but out of affection a lot more respect will come

Therefore, the meaning drawn in relation to the practice ultimately comes from the practitioner who is engaging in the practice. The elements of this sub-practice as similarly discussed for the case of Puducherry.

4.2.3. Practice related to teacher's position in ABL: Puducherry

In the case of Puducherry, participants had similar issues and perceptions with regards to sitting on the floor. Their experience is elaborated in relation to three elements of the practice.

As in the case of Chennai, the **competences** issue was brought about by age and gender-related factors. Ram stated that *young teachers* who were in *zones 3, 4 and 5* did *not have a problem* with sitting down in comparison to the older *urban teachers* (in zone 1 and 2) *aged 50-51* who complained about *sitting down for full day* as they are *aged*. It also indicated that sitting down was a more common problem in urban parts of Puducherry where older teachers were present in comparison to rural areas where the younger/ new recruits were appointed. This becomes an interesting observation as Ram went onto discuss why ABL was not really implemented properly in the urban zones-1 and 2. Beside an age factor, gender-related physical ailments such as *knee problem that is always associated with ladies* was also as issue (Vijay). Puducherry also had male teachers who perceived this to be a concern more amongst women than men.

This competence issues being a common problem was addressed by providing stools for teachers (**material** element) as in the case of Chennai. The ABL classrooms that were provided usually with mats in addition had *small stools* that were made for teacher when *they could not sit down* (Surya). As in the case of Chennai, stools were used to address physical ailments and at the same time supported the requirement to reduce the distance between teacher and student i.e. stools were small and low to maintain physical proximity. Next, the various interpretations in relation to this practice are discussed.

As in the case of Chennai, the significance of this sub-practice of sitting on the floor was perceived in a similar manner amongst teachers in Puducherry. The physical proximity that enabled students to approach the teacher and impact their learning was interpreted positively in terms of the teacher being approachable, or negatively in terms of a lack of respect for teachers. Table 4.4 exhibits these interpretations

Positive interpretation	**Data extracts**
Approachable	*Because the teacher is sitting on the floor and teaching us, for them friendliness became more… besides that, they started asking what is this, what is that*- Rani
Parental values	*Children are coming close to us, how they are keeping relationship with their parents they do the same here with us*- Swetha
Negative interpretations	**Data extracts**
Lack of respect	*I didn't like it in this situation, they didn't respect us, and even though the relationship was deep between us and the children … in sometimes, when we stand here and look there, the fear that was there earlier is not there*- Roopa
Lack of discipline	*The teacher is friendly with us right...saying that if (you) talk with a little affection, that they will take to their advantage or benefit, and they will cheat (the teachers)*- Viji

Table 4.4: Positive and negative interpretations associated with sitting on the floor: Puducherry

As in the case of Chennai, the positive meanings of being approachable and demonstrating supportive parental values were drawn by participants as they functioned from a dominant **projective dimension of agency** as practitioners hypothesised the benefits of positive outcomes of sitting down with the students: willingness to learn and improved pace of learning (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). On the other hand, **iterative agency** seems to predominate in the situation in which participants drew on negative meanings as they drew on past patterns and schemes (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998), as reflected in statements such as *the fear that was there earlier is not* there (Roopa in Table 4.4). The multiple interpretations which are drawn in relation to this sub-practice invariably depend on *the attitude of the teacher* as stated by Archana as *all the teacher* may not favour this *child-friendly* approach.

4.2.4. Change in practice

In relation to this sub-practice of teacher's position, in the traditional method, the teacher was being perceived with fear and respect (meaning), a status which was supported by the tables and chairs present in the classroom (material) while they were positioned in front of the classroom (either standing, walking or dancing when required). The teacher was positioned away from the students through the above elements. With the introduction of ABL method, the teacher was positioned next to the students as the teachers were required to sit down with them (competence) either on the mats provided or small stools (material) based on the underlying meanings that were perceived in terms of positive interpretations (approachable, parental values) or negative interpretations (lack of fear and discipline). As the reversal of the required competence from standing in front of the classroom to sitting on the floor was physically difficult for many teachers,

they were provided access to stools to support this new competence and thereby attempted to create or strengthen the link between material-competence. The meanings associated with this sub- practice were to be de-classified from respect based on fear and re-classified to respect based on affection. Therefore, the change in the teacher's position within the classroom i.e. teacher positioned away from the student (traditional set up) to teacher being seated amongst students (ABL set up), was possible through a change in the respective elements and the subsequent links between the respective elements. The implications of these changes are elaborated on pg. 171 in Chapter 6. Once the teacher is seated next to the students on the floor, they actively interact and teach the students. This is discussed in the next sub-practice below.

4.3. Practice related to teaching style

4.3.1. Teaching style in the traditional method

The traditional method focuses on the teacher instructing all their students together based on the curriculum present in the textbook, by explaining its content through the use of the blackboard and flash cards. This teaching style that was similar in the case of Chennai and Puducherry, is explored in relation to different competences, material and meaning.

In terms of **competence**, the teacher who was positioned in the front of the classroom *teaches all the students together* **(**Bhuvana-C) who were usually of the *same age group* (Jaya-P) and belonged to a single graded classroom. Teachers were expected to *finish the curriculum* (Murali-C) in a structured manner as they developed lesson plans for each subject. Bhavani (C) described this plan

> *We will have a particular time … in that time we have to teach the lesson, we will have to write and put this question and answer. This is what (we will do) for this month. One lesson plan we would make it ready*

As mentioned above a lesson plan is a detailed layout of different steps developed by the teacher to complete a lesson within a specific time using different teaching-learning material (Mani Nadar et al., 2008). It served as a guiding tool for the teacher during the class.

Besides this lesson plan laid out by the teacher, the teacher used different teaching-learning **material** such as the textbook, blackboard and flash cards. Madhu (C) emphasised that in the traditional method, the teachers had to teach *from the textbook*. As the main teaching-learning material within the traditional method, the role of the textbook will be discussed in-depth in section 5.1 of Chapter 5. Besides teaching the curriculum from the textbook, the teacher also used the *chalk* to write on the *blackboard* present in the front of the classroom to explain and guide the students (Preethi-C) and served as a visual aid for the teacher. As Preethi (C) discussed the material involved in traditional practices, she mentioned the use of *flashcards*

as another teaching-learning material in order to gather student's attention[46], that were prepared by each teacher and some were supplied by the Education Department as well (Mani Nadar et al., 2008). This teaching style of instructing all students together with use of different material, helped the teacher gather student attention. Besides the purpose of getting the student's attention, there were other understandings associated with this practice.

The underlying **meaning** of this teaching style indicated the predominant role of the teacher in the traditional practice. Murali (C) while discussing the traditional practices that had existed before ABL, stated that it was '*teacher-centred*' as the teacher played an active role in the teaching-learning process.

> *whatever the teacher says in relation to the lesson, they* (*students*) *will just listen to that … so there was less opportunity for them to ask questions*

The above statement also indicated the passive role of students in the classroom who were receivers of information without actively engaging with the teacher, which goes to show that it was a teacher-dominated classroom. This dominance was highlighted by other participants who focused on the importance of ensuring the attention was on the teacher, which was a prerequisite for this teaching style, as reflected in Madhu's (C) statement

> *if there are 40 students, we have to bring their complete attention on us and then only we begin to teach them*

The teacher will begin to teach them by *writing on the blackboard* that directed the student attention *towards the teacher* and *was accepted by the students* (Padmini-C). This 'acceptance' by students indicated their passive role within the classroom. Given the strong presence of the teacher (who gathered the attention of the students through the use of the blackboard), they were able to effectively control the classroom. Aspects of control were also visible in their approach to completing the curriculum which was achieved through the lesson plan that was mentioned in the previous page. Since most of the control remained in the hands of the teacher, it also allowed the teacher to take breaks, suggesting stress was limited for the teacher. This was mentioned by Lakshmi (C)

> *Because, we will make all of them sit together, we will write on the board, we will be able to take some rest*

[46] While teaching them alphabets, the flashcard of letter 'Aa' in the English language will have the picture of an apple

Having the ability to take a break when they desired, the teacher had overall control of the flow of the teaching process within the classroom. Therefore, control seemed to an underlying understanding of this teaching style (*meaning*) exhibited through the ability of the teacher to teach for all students together (*competence*) supported by the blackboard and flashcards (*material*) which supported the students' attention remaining on the teacher. The links between the three elements resulted in the emergence of this teaching style as exhibited in Figure 4.3.

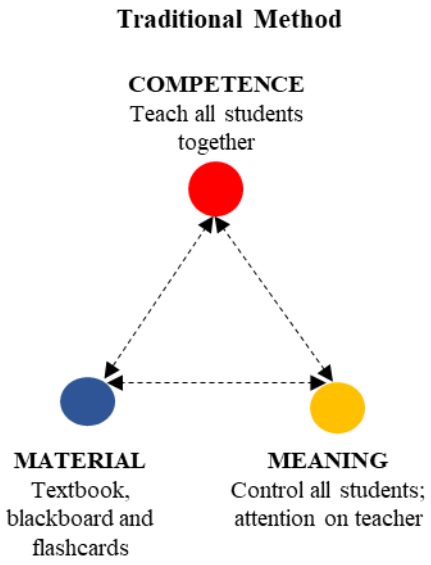

Figure 4.3: Practice related to teaching style in the traditional method

This style of teaching all students together in a classroom was characteristic feature of the traditional method that had existed for a considerable period (Kumar, 2005). With the introduction of ABL, this teaching style was transformed in terms of teachers need to pay individual attention to students with the assistance of different material. This change is discussed in relation to different elements of practice for the case of Chennai and Puducherry.

4.3.2. Practice related to teaching style in ABL: Chennai

Competence

ABL teachers were required to provide individual attention to the students in the classrooms. The individual attention was in the form of teaching each student and/or 2-3 students together (in the two-teacher supported group). Teachers are also required to monitor the progress of the students present in the other four groups (as discussed in section 3.3.2). In terms of teaching each student individually, since the student progresses through the learning cards based on their own capabilities, the teacher was required to teach each student individually when they come to the designated teacher-supported card. This was perceived to be an increase

in the usual workload of the teacher who would previously have taught the entire class as one group in the traditional classroom set up. This potential problem was exhibited by Selvi below

> *For the whole class, we can take a lesson for 2 to 3 times… If there are 40 students, the teacher we must teach 40 of them individually. So, it increases the workload to the teachers*

Besides giving individual attention, the teachers were required to monitor each student's progress through the learning cards on a regular basis, as student progress is based on their own learning capabilities through the 6 different groups in the classroom, as stated by Jayashree

> *We must see.. 'Where were you, where were you and where were you?' (referring to each student) Individual attention must be given to each child to see how they progressed each day*

The teacher is therefore required to teach the students in the two-teacher supported group and at the same time check the progress of the other students in the other four groups. However, managing these six groups in the classroom was strenuous for the teacher. Padma stated that as she worked with the students in the teacher supported group, she would also have to answer questions of the student who approached her from other groups which disturbed the flow of teaching

> *Now when they come and ask, since I'm leaving them (referring to one group) and telling the other, they get distracted.*

Besides answering questions for the students, at times the teacher was required to provide much more guidance (than anticipated) to students in the other four groups. Given that peer learning was expected to occur in two groups in the classroom, participants indicated that this did not necessarily happen. Sanjana illustrated this issue with peer learning in terms of how the bright students tend to focus on completing their own cards instead of helping other students and as a result, the other students (irrespective of which group they are in) approached the teacher for guidance. The statement below indicated her frustration of having to manage all groups in the classroom

> *In the last group also they will ask 'Miss can I do this' each one will come and ask. All the 6 groups rely on us and that is the truth!*

This competence of handling students in six groups who are at different stages of learning was rather a new competence that teachers were expected to develop, as previously the grouping system did not exist in the traditional practice. This grouping system was further complicated by a multi-grade set-up. Initially the teachers were required to mingle grades one to four together in a single classroom. This was a characteristic feature of an ABL classroom as it was to support peer learning and also to help combat the issue of teacher shortage that previously existed in schools (Anandalakshmy et al., 2007; Singal et al., (no date)). However,

Shruthi stated that *having four classes together* also created the demand that the for her to *cover the syllabus* of grades one to four and needed to teach and guide all the students across those grades.

She goes onto state that she had to juggle between the syllabus of the four grades with a focus on completing the portions, rather than developing and strengthening the skills of the students. Besides a syllabus issue faced by a teacher, they also struggled to manage the six groups in a multi-grade classroom. Given there was an age gap between the students in the classroom i.e. a grade one student aged five and a grade four aged nine, the participants mentioned that there were frequent fights between the children. The fights were disruptive to the flow of teaching and learning in the classroom and teachers were responsible for resolving the conflicts. This issue was further escalated as Ananya stated that *parents' complaint started coming a lot* due to these fights amongst students. Given the issues of combining four grades together, over time the organisation of classes was changed so that teachers were required only to combine two grades (grade one and two together; grade three and four together)[47] (NCERT, 2011). Besides the multi-grade issue, the total number of students in a class also had an impact on carrying out the ABL method. While describing managing an ABL class, Radhika stressed the impact of student numbers

ABL is impossible if the (student) strength is a lot!

As the teacher to students ratio is 1:30 (Kannappan et al., 2016), when teachers had a multi-grade set up this made it tougher for them to manage and control the classroom. Therefore, the key competence of the teacher in relation to this sub-practice involved paying individual attention to students and managing a multi-graded classroom within which students are spread across six different groups, an increase in overall workload and a serious issue of control for the teacher. Given these different expected competences, participants also suggested that engaging with the ABL method was based on the teacher, as reflected in Shruthi's statement

It is in teachers' hands. If the teacher becomes tired… we cannot blame the methodology.

Given the key role of the practitioner in enacting this sub-practice, the role of material that supports these competences and a shared understanding of this sub-practice is discussed below.

Material

The primary ABL material i.e. the learning cards and the learning ladder effectively supported this style of teaching, with the teacher providing attention to each student and allowing each student to develop each skill based on their capacity especially since the learning cards were *designed based on a separate skill*

[47] This was also based on the availability of classroom space within the schools

(Bhuvana). As the student completed the learning card, their progress was monitored by the teacher on the learning ladder to ensure they follow the sequence of the ladder. Given the crucial role of the ABL material especially the learning cards in the teaching process, supply and maintenance of these are key for this sub-practice. However, there were issues regarding this aspect of the material which are discussed below.

Mahalakshmi stated that since a set of ABL cards were provided for 20 students, it proved to be an issue in schools with a higher number of students. She elaborated below with the example of the school she worked in

> *We had 35 students and we needed at least 2 sets for a subject…but to that extent, we will not get card. They will give 1 or 2 sets only for a school.*

Due to the limited supply of learning cards, Mahalakshmi said that the rooms were split subject wise, and the students moved from one room to another when they were required to do a different subject. This brought its own issue of being disruptive for both teachers and students, and was time-consuming given the movement to a new location. Even if school managed to work with the limited number of cards they had received, maintaining these cards was key. This emerged as an important concern amongst participants and is discussed below.

Madhu described she would struggle to teach students the relevant learning card in instances where students would have been damaging the cards (e.g. *children tear the card)* or the cards were misplaced. In such a scenario, due to the absence of a particular learning card, Madhu stated that she would tell the students to *skip the card* or learn *from the textbook.* Alternatively, she also replaced the original learning cards with photocopies *(xerox)* when she found out that the learning cards were missing. The teacher was therefore required to maintain the supply of cards and check that learning cards were available for the students in order to ensure the smooth progress of students through the ladder. The teacher checked the learning cards regularly as they prepared and arranged the learning material in the classroom at the end of the day, so that classes would run smoothly the next day. One such crucial task was arranging the learning cards in trays that are kept behind the classroom as stated by Radhika

> *Every day, teachers will come and check that respective logo cards only are there (in the tray)*

This was crucial when the student attempted to progress from one card to another, they accessed the learning cards from the trays and if the cards were not there it affected the progress of the student. Therefore, access to material discussed in terms of supply and maintenance of learning cards was crucial to this sub-practice of ABL. The competence and material aspects of this sub-practice required the teacher to pay individual

attention to students, and to ensure the availability of the cards. The underlying shift in attention from teacher to student is discussed in the meaning element of this sub-practice below.

Meaning

In the ABL method, teachers were required to pay individual attention to the students in the classroom, as it was based on the premise that a classroom is filled with students who had different learning capabilities. Bhuvana stated this below

> *When there is a classroom, there will be extraordinary children, average children, below average children… they will be in that set up only. We were not based on that*

The last line of Bhuvana's excerpt above highlighted that previous traditional practices did not factor for different learning capabilities of the student since it was a '*teacher-centred approach*'. She elaborated that ABL, in contrast, was a '*learner-centred*' approach that focused on *'each student developing their own skill'.* Thus, this transition from a teacher-centred approach in traditional practice to a learner-centred approach with teacher's requirement of paying individual attention to students had different interpretations amongst the participants, particularly with reference to the limited levels of achievable control amongst the teachers.

As a result of the different competences expected of the teacher in an ABL classroom, participants had negative and positive interpretations of their limited control. On one hand, participants state that there will be *no silence in the ABL classroom* (Jyothi) as students *clarify doubts by asking teachers and students.* As a result, the classroom is perceived to be noisy as the teacher tries to manage the different groups. This is reflected in Padmini's statement

> *when we go to next group he will start talking with his friends... then all that we felt as a disturbance.*

As a result of being seated in groups, Padmini stated (below) that students didn't engage in learning, a comment which was based on her assumption that the teacher's presence or attention was required for students to study

> *Then only if we go to each one and teach…till the time we do not go and tell he will not study.*

Since teachers were predominantly present in the two teacher-supported groups in the classroom, the teacher's attention in the peer-supported and independent learning groups were rather limited. In such a scenario, Padmini mentioned that she *'felt bad'* when she implemented ABL, as she was not able to gather the attention of all the students in the classroom and so indicated her preference for the traditional method.

Therefore, a negative interpretation of lack of control due to limited teacher attention time, and the teacher's preference for the traditional method, suggested the presence of **iterative agency** as the individual drew upon past schemes of student learning in which the teacher gathered student attention through traditional practices (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). On the other hand, limited control was perceived as beneficial for the students in the sense that *children did not have classroom fear* since they had the *freedom* to *work out exercises, ask the teacher doubts* (Jyothi). This positive interpretation of less control has been attributed to the operation of the more **projective agency**, where the participants suggested that less control contributed to students being happier in their classroom, in comparison to their being fearful, as in the past (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). These positive or negative interpretations of limited control invariably rested with the practitioner and the respective dimension of agency that is dominant at that given point of time.

Given the increased workload and the effort expected of the teacher, they were required to be active in the ABL classroom, teaching and monitoring the progress of each student, Lakshmi previously reflected (see p.121) that she could rest more in traditional practice, something which was not the case after ABL. She highlights her hectic role in ABL below

> *But after ABL, we will not even have the time to turn… when one child finishes another child will come… so we will we spinning like a top in the class.*

Lakshmi uses the phrase *'spinning like a top'* to indicate how the teacher was required to engage with students most of the time in the classroom and suggested the lack of opportunity to take a break which she previously had in the traditional classroom set up. Overall the participants had positive and negative interpretations of the comparatively limited control within this practice, and acknowledged the different capabilities of the students and their active role as a teacher within this setting. As this teaching style of ABL was experienced in a similar manner by the participants of Puducherry, the following section will briefly discuss this sub-practice of ABL based on the elements of the practice.

4.3.3. Practice related to teaching style in ABL: Puducherry

In terms of **competence**, providing individual attention to the student was perceived to a '*laborious'* task for teachers, since more observation skills were required of the teacher (Archana). Harish mentioned that as he was required to teach students one on one, when he paid *attention to one student, the other students* in the classroom would *talk* and get distracted. These 'other' students were seated in different groups such as peer-supported or self-evaluation groups. The teacher's attention on those groups was limited as the teacher in an ABL classroom was required to teach students individually and also to check the progress of students in the other groups. The nature of this competence was reflected in Swetha's statement

> *we will be sitting in group 2, and we should take care of group 3 and 4 … we should constantly see them… sometimes the children will not do anything with the cards, they will keep talking… so them also we have to control.*

Interpretations of the competences of managing different groups through aspects of control will be discussed in detail under the meaning section of this practice. As in the case of Chennai, managing an ABL classroom was further complicated by its multi-graded features i.e. managing fights amongst students. Raji stated since the classroom had students from the fourth grade and first grade, *there used to be a lot of fights, which was a problem.* This set up was further complicated by the number of students present in a classroom. An overall increase in student numbers would also increase the number of students in each group and therefore have an impact on the teacher's ability to *know what the children in other groups are doing* (Ram). So, in relation to the competence, as in the case of Chennai, teachers were required to pay individual attention to students and also manage the progress of the student in other groups, a task which was complicated by the multi-graded feature and by the number of students. Given the increase in the teacher's workload in comparison to the traditional practice, participants mentioned the key role of the teacher to implement the method. Jaya's stated that *everything is in teacher's control* as she discussed her experience while implementing ABL in the classroom. These competences were supported and enacted through use of different material which is discussed below.

The learning cards and learning ladder were the core **material** of ABL and particularly for this sub-practice as described in the case of Chennai. Harish mentioned that since *everything was in the card* which the students had access to, *he would teach from the card.* Besides teaching the students from the learning cards, the teacher was also required to monitor their progress based on the learning ladder by *marking* or making a note of what *level the child had completed* in the learning ladder (Archana). Therefore, it can be noted that the design of the learning card and ladder supported the requirement of providing individual attention for each student. Given these were common materials accessed by all students through their learning, participants at the time did complain of material being damaged, stolen or lost. Keerthi described how these material issues surfaced as the teacher rearranged the material for the next day

> *... children try to tear the cards, try to steal the cards… …Daily we have to go cards number wise. While arranging we will realise some cards will be missing.*

Damaged or missing learning cards was a *difficult situation* for the teacher as it hindered the progress of the students in the classroom (Jaya). As highlighted in the case of Chennai, the teacher was required to either get a photocopy of the original learning card or manage to teach the student without the learning card. Therefore, access and maintenance of material are crucial to ensure the emergence of this practice

Since teachers were required to give individual attention, manage groups in the classroom with the different teaching-learning material, the control over the entire classroom that existed in traditional practices was dispersed to individuals and small groups. As a result of the shift in the nature of control, there were positive and negative interpretations of aspects of control. This interpretation featured in terms of benefits or drawbacks of a loss of control.

Similar to the case of Chennai, a positive interpretation of the shift in control was present. Priya described the dynamic nature of the ABL classroom as *children were not made to sit in one place* and could go around, *ask teachers questions and engage in collaborative learning.* This correlated with a fear-free environment that was discussed in the case of Chennai as Priya elaborated on how students engaged in learning *without boredom* and were having *a nice and pleasant time* in the classroom. The interpretation may be viewed due to predominance of **projective agency** where the teacher was in support of the changes and saw the benefits of giving individual attention and of their own limited control (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). On the other hand, there was also a negative interpretation in relation to control that was discussed in terms of the classroom being *too noisy or clumsy* (Rani). This was mentioned as a potential issue for teachers who had problems controlling the classroom, and who particularly worked within the traditional method assumption that the classroom needed to be silent. Therefore, this negative interpretation of control was drawn by the practitioner who was working through an **iterative dimension of agency**, drawing on taken for granted schemas of the past (i.e. classroom required to be silent) (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). This highlights that individual practitioners each drew on a different interpretation and therefore played a crucial role in performing the practice. This has been particularly discussed in relation to this sub-practice as Jaya described how they could '*not even rest for a minute'* as '*attention had to be paid to all groups'* suggesting a rather active role for the teacher similar to the case of Chennai. It once again came in contrast to the traditional method where the teacher had the opportunity to rest even during class hours by sitting at the table and chair provided in the classroom. Overall, participants had positive and negative interpretations in relation to control as meaning within this sub-practice, and acknowledged the active and pivotal role of the teacher.

4.3.4. Change in practice

In the traditional method, the sub-practice of teaching style required the teacher to teach to all students together (competence) by using the textbook and blackboard (material) based on the shared understanding that focus/attention remained on the teacher who managed to control the entire classroom, with a passive role for the students. With the introduction of the ABL method, this sub-practice was radically transformed as the teachers were required to develop a range of competences i.e. teach student 1-1 or small groups, manage multi-graded groups across classroom; learning was supported with relevant learning material such

as learning cards and learning ladder; and the class functioned based on the different interpretations of teachers in relation to control being dispersed through groups, as both the students and teachers took on a more active role within the classroom. The abstraction and reversal process of these competences (such as managing the group) were developed and supported through training manuals and the training sessions themselves, and therefore validates the key role played by training in the emergence of the practice. The enactment of the new competences, such as managing groups or paying individual attention, was also supported by the access to relevant learning material such as learning cards and ladder. The data highlighted how teachers faced issues with supply and maintenance of such material, suggesting that this element was crucial in maintaining the material-competence link. In terms of a change in meaning, control as interpretation of this practice shifted as the control was de-classified in terms of controlling the entire classroom and expecting the classroom to be silent, and re-classified in terms of control being dispersed by managing groups in the flexible and fear-free classroom. This re-classification in terms of a shift in control was interpreted positively for students or negatively causing issues for teachers. The implications of the change in elements discussed on pg.172 in Chapter 6. In addition to these two sub-practices of ABL, related to the teacher's position and teaching style, the assessment practices in ABL were also unique and form a key feature in ABL. This sub-practice is discussed below.

4.4. Practice related to assessment

This section discusses the summative assessment practice of the students in relation to traditional (examinations) and the ABL method (test cards). Due to the social significance associated to examinations (which will be discussed below), examinations were conducted side-by-side in relation to ABL test cards. The traditional assessment practice is first discussed, followed by the ABL method to indicate the difficulty of a change in practice.

4.4.1. Assessment in the traditional method

The traditional assessment practices were similar in the case of Chennai and Puducherry with the teacher preparing and conducting examination for all the students. Besides this competence, the material involved and the underlying meaning with regards to this practice were also similar in both cases.

In terms of **competence**, the teacher was required to *finish the curriculum* that was given in the textbook, and conduct *examinations* or *tests* based on the portions completed (Bhuvana-C). These examinations were usually conducted at the end of the term. There are 3 terms in the academic calendar (June to April) of primary school students so the teacher was required to finish the syllabus for that particular term and prepare the relevant question paper. Overall, examinations were conducted thrice a year i.e. one for each term,

quarterly, half-yearly and then the annual examination (SSA, 2009). Besides examinations, Sanjana (C) mentioned that they conducted periodical tests such as *monthly or weekly test* within the term.

In reference to **material**, the examination papers are usually prepared by each classroom teacher (Kannappan et al., 2016). Besides these question papers, the performance of the students in this assessment, which was reflected in terms of marks, was recorded in a report card or *rank card* (Govind-P). These rank cards were a reflection of the student's learning capabilities/progress and were made available to the parents (Kannappan et al., 2016; SSA, 2009). It also positioned a student against their peers in the classroom i.e. ranked them in terms of the performance. Given the system of examinations was a long-standing practice (GoI, 1993), there was a strong underlying **meaning** associated with it and is discussed below.

The assessment practices, especially exams, seemed to be a symbol of the student's learning and progress at school. In reflecting on the importance of examinations, Sanjana (C) explained how parents *felt the children were studying in school only when there were exams and homework.* Examinations were, therefore, a tool to ensure the student is engaged in learning. Besides being a symbol of a student studying/learning in school, having an examination through the year was also an indicator of the student's progress through the grade. Chitra (C) stated that parents were *doubtful* about how children *pass* (or progress) *without an exam.*

Therefore, examinations were strongly identified with student's studying in school and crucial in terms of getting promoted to another grade. A 'good' student in the school is identified by the grades they get in their examination, i.e. the higher the grade the 'better' the student. This association of examination with student learning and progress was amplified by the underlying social lore that doing well in an examination, reflected through good grades, will help the student get into a good university and thereby will serve as the basis for securing employment and overall for having a financially secure life (GoI, 1993; Kumar, 2005). Hence, ensuring students do well in examinations was of paramount importance not only for teachers but for parents as well, given the social significance attached to it. Given this implication of examinations, parents and teacher re-enforced the concepts of examinations for a student from a very young age, as young as primary school, in order to ensure they do well, thereby putting them under pressure to perform well in the assessments. As a result of this pressure, the students developed a sense of fear and worry of failure towards examinations (Kumar, 1988; NCF, 2005) which resonated in Chitra's (C) comment about how students get *sick during exam time*. Besides being structured, the same examination paper was given to all students. As depicted in Figure 4.4, the assessment practice in the traditional method entailed the teacher preparing questions papers and test, evaluating and preparing a report card (competence and material) and served a socio-cultural symbol of student learning and progress (meaning)

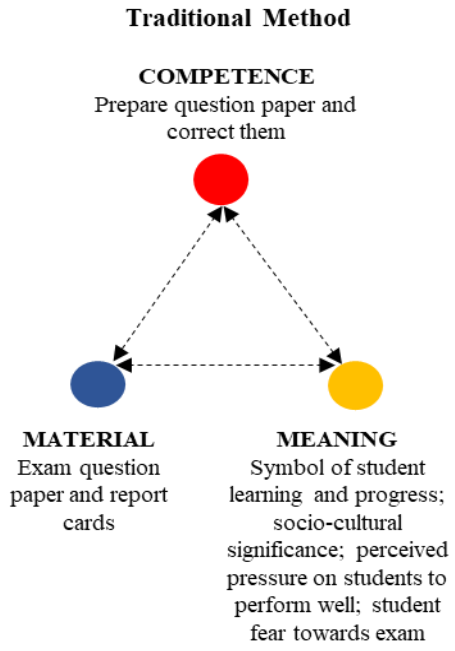

Figure 4.4: Assessment practice in the traditional method

This standardised and structured form of assessment which had a deep-rooted socio-cultural element paved way to a rather different form of evaluation in ABL. This is explored through the different elements of practice i.e. meaning material and competence for the case of Chennai and Puducherry.

4.4.2. Practice related to assessment in ABL: Chennai

Competence

In term of competences, the teacher had to monitor and record the progress of the student through the test cards and record it in an attainment chart. The teacher was required to assess if the student needed remedial work in order to effectively attain the competence or if they had mastered the concept well enough to progress to the next set of activities (The Chennai Corporation, 2007). However, allowing students to progress at their own pace, conditional upon their attainment of that skill, posed a problem within the academic year.

Khushbhu indicated that some of the students did not complete these assessment cards within the scheduled period, a term, due to *some problems in the family or being absent or they had to go out of station.* As a result of this, once they had returned, they were *unable to complete the card.* Given that there were students who were studying their learning cards *in a day and there are children who study it for 9 days also'*(Bhavani) indicating various learning capabilities amongst students, it would have resulted in the students being at different stages of the curriculum. Preethi illustrated how students can be at different stages, reflected through the learning cards having been completed, at the end of the 1st term (i.e. quarterly)

> *Someone might haven't completed quarterly at that time where others might have completed half yearly.*

In such a scenario, the teachers were required to prepare exam question papers based on the progress of the student which is based on the number of learning cards the student had finished. Mahalakshmi stated it was '*difficult'* as they had to categorise students and prepare different question papers for each group. In such cases, the teacher would have to *prepare 3 question papers for a term, based on the level (*Khushbhu) making the job more tedious for the teacher. It is important to keep in mind that although the teachers were given the flexibility of conducting examinations, the question paper was required to be based on the learning cards completed by the students, rather than on the lessons in the textbook. Sanjana stated that she was given permission by higher authorities to conduct examinations to *satisfy parents* and ensure it is *based on the cards only, not anything else.* This leans into the meaning element of the sub-practice and will be discussed in detail in the following section. Before that, the next section briefly highlights the material element of the practice.

Material

In the early stages of ABL, the children were required to complete two 'test cards' that were present for each standard, i.e. one in the middle, in December, and the other towards the end of the academic year, in April (The Chennai Corporation, 2007). These test cards were present in the learning ladder and were taken up by students as they progressed along the ladder. The teacher was also required to maintain an 'attainment chart' and a consolidated attainment chart. The former was used to record in pencil the date on which the student starts a logo and the date on which it was completed. The latter accounts for the total time, usually the number of days, that a student takes to complete all the logos. These charts were to be maintained for each subject and each standard. As highlighted in the competence section, teachers were given the flexibility to prepare question papers based only on the cards completed by the student. The interpretations in relation to this assessment practice are discussed below.

Meaning

As mentioned earlier, students were required to complete the 2 test cards per subject that were built into the learning ladder. These test cards were *'colourful'* which helped students have *'no fear during the exams'* (Bhuvana). This was in line with bringing about burden-free education and assessing students based on their capabilities at their own pace, and such positive interpretations suggested the dominant presence of **projective agency** in which the practitioner acknowledged the benefits of their students having no fear of exams (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). However, at times this proved to be an issue given that students were allowed to progress at their own pace whilst being monitored by the teacher. As the teacher did not let the

students' progress from one card to another until the student attained the skill for that card, the students progressed slowly and hence caused a lag as mentioned by Malani

...Because of that what happened, the 4th standard child was in the 2nd standard card

As a result of this, Malani said that the lag in the student's progress was questioned by inspecting officials.

'the last time I came he was in the same card and now also he is in the same card?'....

In such scenarios, Malani stated that she learnt to be flexible in terms of students progressing through the learning cards and ensured that students made consistent progress through the academic year, which indicated the presence of **a practical evaluative agency** of getting the job done in relation to the assessments of their students (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). Some participants had mentioned that they had the flexibility of conducting examinations. Since examinations served as a strong social symbol of progress especially for parents, and the initial absence of exams in the ABL method was a concern for them. While discussing assessment practice, Mahalakshmi stressed that *parents did not like* the fact that there were no tests or exams and *without exams they didn't agree* (Chitra) with the ABL method. As a result of this issue being raised by parents, teachers were given the flexibility to conduct exams to satisfy parents (as highlighted in the competence section) based on the learning cards completed by the student. This goes to show that the traditional material concept of examination was modified and made compatible with ABL test cards as both were based on content completed by the student rather than the traditional examination which was based on content completed by the teacher.

4.4.3. Practice related to assessment in ABL: Puducherry

In the case of Puducherry, the assessment sub-practice was similar as in the case of Chennai and presented in relation to the three elements of the assessment.

In terms of **competence**, teachers were expected to conduct the assessment for the students based on the *test cards* (Keerthi) and progress of the student is noted by the teacher in the *achievement chart that is posted on the wall* (Vijay). Similar to the case of Chennai, participants in Puducherry indicated that the test cards and achievement charts were not perceived as being representational of student learning, and therefore they continued to have examinations alongside ABL cards (will be subsequently discussed). As in the case of Chennai, Roopa stated that they prepared *question paper* for the students based on *ABL cards*. With the test cards, achievement charts and question papers serving as key **material** as in the case of Chennai, the interpretations (**meaning**) indicated similar issues and concerns faced by participants in both cases.

Given that ABL's mode of assessment was in contrast to the traditional assessment practices of test and examinations, participants mentioned it was an issue for parents. As parents perceived the tests, examination

or report card/rank card symbolic of student learning and progress, in ABL the absence of this symbolic representation of learning was a concern for parents. In ABL, since the assessment practices were inbuilt, in terms of the test cards, and the progress of each student was displayed in achievement charts that only existed in the classrooms, the parents were not aware of their child's progress. As a result of this lack of awareness, parents began to question what their child was doing in school as described by Harish

> *For parents are the (children) studying or not … what is our son doing? There is no rank card… If he finishes it we put a star that he has passed this stage…. That star will be in the classroom only.*

Due to change in form (test cards) and representation (achievement chart) of assessment, initially *no test and rank cards* were given, and it became an *issue for parents* (Govind). As a result of this, Surya stated that the traditional practice of *examinations* continued to exist *alongside* the ABL system of *test cards*. Vijay justified this practice of having an examination in ABL given the perceptions of parents and hence they *could not forgo certain schemes.* Based on the discussion of the traditional assessment practice, examinations were considered a 'legitimate' requirement through which the child's learning abilities could be assessed and declared to the parents through grades or marks. Therefore, as in the case of Chennai, at times examinations were conducted alongside ABL cards in order to satisfy parents.

4.4.4. Change in practice

The traditional assessment practice focused on the teacher completing the required syllabus for respective terms, and then conducting periodic tests and examinations that were prepared by themselves, in the case of Chennai and Puducherry. The examinations were based on the curriculum laid out in the textbook (competence and material). This was based on the shared understanding of the social-cultural significance attributed to the examination being symbolic of students' progress and also serving as benchmark for success in life (meaning). Given such significance, students developed a sense of fear of failure towards examinations which was standardised for all students, periodically conducted and therefore perceived as a burden. With the introduction of ABL, the assessment practices shifted from this fear-based approach to a more joyful, fear-free approach to assessment with the introduction of test cards that students took based on their own learning capabilities (therefore non-standardised) and at their own pace (material). However, given the radical change in assessment practice, there were underlying issues faced by teachers particularly in terms of parents' strong preference for examinations. As teachers were faced with institutional complexity i.e. "incompatible prescription from multiple logics" (Greenwood et al., 2011, p.317) in both sites, the teachers managed this situation by combing the logics exhibited in material practices.

In both the cases of Chennai and Puducherry, the teachers were instructed to prepare examination material based on the learning cards which had been completed by the students, a method which suggested that the

material aspect of a traditional examination (teacher-centred logic) functioned based on the learner-centred logic; the logic of preparing material based on each student's learning capabilities instead of a standardised format being based on the content taught by the teacher. By drawing on the learner-centred logic of ABL to the traditional material of examinations based on teacher-centred logic or in other words by combing aspects of both logics, the teachers seemed to have addressed parent's concern of lack of examinations and continue with ABL form of assessment through their daily practices. The implications of this approach with regards to the practice is further elaborated on pg.174 in Chapter 6.

Overall, the three sub-practices of ABL- teacher's position, teaching style and assessment practice take the form of *practice work* which refers to "actors' effort to affect the recognition and acceptance of set routines" (Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010, p.190). In this context, practice work brings about a change from teacher-centred logic of traditional method to a learner-centred logic of ABL, an institutional change, through practices. Based on Shove et al's (2012) proposition of element changing over time, these findings indicated how the access and maintenance of material, the abstraction and reversal of competence and de- and re-classification of meaning support the change in elements and therefore the overall practice. Over time, this practice work would resemble "embedding and routinizing" form of institutional work (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006, p.230) as the practitioners engage in these sub-practices that reflects the foundations of learner-centred logics become embedded in their daily routines and contributes to the maintenance of ABL. The implications of these forms of institutional work in creating and maintaining ABL is elaborated in Chapter 6, section 6.1. It is important to note that the maintenance of ABL is not to be assumed or considered automatic and occurs through the enactment of these practices. In order to support and ensure these sub-practices of ABL are performed by practitioners, monitoring as key form of institutional work was carried out. This is discussed below.

4.5. Practice related to monitoring

The practice related monitoring discusses the participants' experience when the ABL classroom was inspected by officials. Since, monitoring or in other word "policing" plays a crucial role in maintaining institutions through compliance to rules and regulation (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006, p.231), this practice highlight how participants were required to comply to different rules regarding ABL. Compliance was demonstrated through teachers performing ABL competences and maintaining different material when they were inspected by officials. In Chennai, the Additional Educational Officers (AEO) were one of the inspecting officials (Bedi and Kingdon, (no date)) and in Puducherry it was the Deputy Inspector of Schools (DIS) (SSA, 2011). The elements of monitoring practice are discussed in greater depth in the case of Chennai compared to Puducherry and rationale will be stated in section 4.5.2

4.5.1. Chennai

Competence

Table 4.5 below highlights the various competences of the teacher that are inspected during monitoring practice.

Competence	Data excerpt
Required to sit on the floor	*When a visit is happening, we have to be sitting on the floor* (Preethi)
Ensure students are seated in right group with respective learning cards	*'They are not in their group? There is no card!' (*Ananya)
Aware of learning standards of their students	*Who all are studying, who are not studying. We have to see to that also. They will check it suddenly* (Mahalakshmi)

Table 4.5: ABL competences inspected during monitoring: Chennai

With regards to the requirement of sitting on the floor, Preethi stated that at times some teachers also *approached a high-level official and got the permission* to use the chair in the classroom due to physical ailments that prevent a teacher from sitting on the floor. Besides sitting on the floor, as indicated in Table 4.5, the teachers were also expected to ensure students were seated in the right group with relevant material (Ananya), were expected to know the learning standards of all their students since they were inspected by officials (Mahalakshmi).

Besides these ABL related competences, it was interesting to note that teachers were not allowed to exhibit any traditional practices. Varsha stated that they should *not write on the blackboard and teach for everyone* as it was the *normal method.* However, Varsha mentioned that she did use the blackboard particularly in the afternoon time as the students will be tired post-lunch. Ananya also stated that she used to teach students together in the afternoon but at times did get questioned by higher officials

> *Say somebody is coming for visit, past lunch hours, then only we will do it mostly, if there is chorus then means… 'Like this why are you doing all this?'*

Therefore, the monitoring practice not only inspected the ABL competences of teachers but also questioned the use of traditional practices within the ABL classroom which also prevented them from using the traditional methods. In other words, inspection as monitoring practice re-enforced the key sub-practices of ABL (teacher's position, teaching style and assessment practice) based on the learner-centred logic, supported by key ABL related material that are highlighted below.

Material

During inspection, different ABL based teaching-learning material were significant as they were symbolic of teachers teaching students through the ABL method. Table 4.6 displays how teachers were questioned about working with and maintaining the different teaching-learning material such as learning cards, achievement chart and other supplementary material such as low-level blackboard and wireline that displayed students' artwork [48]

Material	Data excerpt
Progress in learning card	*The inspecting officer… 'Which milestone is he in? what card has he finished? Does he know this logo?* (Jayashree)
Maintain achievement chart	*If they have finished means, we mark/tick it by week-end or month end.* (Bhavani)
Low-level blackboard	*Has he written the card he has studied in the low-level board?* (Ananya)
Wireline	*Miss will have to sign this on this date and put it on the kambi panthal!' that officials will come and see…. They will see the date!* (Bhavani)

Table 4.6: ABL material inspected during monitoring: Chennai

Since the learning cards was the main teaching-learning material, as exhibited in Table 4.6, inspecting officials would question students based on the learning cards (Jayashree) which was recorded by the teacher in the achievement chart (Bhavani). In addition to these two materials, the low-level blackboard was also significant at it was one of the indicators of ABL being implemented in the classroom. It also served as a representation of each student's learning progress and was used as a tool to assess the student as elaborated by Madhavi

> *When he writes likes that 'oh he has gone this far!?' … the person (visit) will ask questions. Or they will ask him to write. But who all is in which level, (you) can know when you see that board.*

In addition, the wireline was also an element that was frequently inspected as the craftwork of the students was displayed on the wireline that was hung above the class as stated by Bhavani in Table 4.6. Besides these ABL materials, the use and presence of other traditional method material were questioned by the officials. For instance, as Jayashree stated that officials *won't ask* if teachers had *finished lesson in the books* or ask the students to *take the book and read,* she also mentioned how officials asked, '*Why are there table*

[48] Besides the low-level blackboard and wireline, there were various other supplementary material that teachers were required to maintain as ABL was a resource intensive method. Other materials included weather chart, self-attendance chart that were maintained by the student and teacher

chairs are there?' For officials, the presence of the table and chair might have suggested that teachers do not sit on the floor in the classroom and therefore do not implement ABL effectively. Given there was an order *that there should not be any chairs in the classroom* (Malani), this was an example that some officials were rather strict about certain aspects. Therefore, using and maintaining ABL material such as cards, achievement chart, black-board and wireline inspected during monitoring practice seemed to be instrumental in re-enforcing the ABL method and simultaneously questioning the presence/use of textbooks, table and chairs, blackboard (mentioned under competence) was an attempt to avoid the slipping into traditional pedagogy. This will be further highlighted in the section below. Taking as a starting point the requirement of the teacher competences, particularly in relation to different material, there were distinct meanings in relation to this practice of monitoring and are discussed below.

Meaning

These inspection requirements (in terms of material and competence) had different interpretations amongst participants. In the section above, I highlighted how chairs were being removed in ABL classroom as a measure to get teachers to sit on the floor. This was because the presence of the chair or a teacher sitting on the chair was associated with *not doing ABL* (Madhavi). However, as mentioned in the competence section of this practice, some teachers might have sought permission to sit on a stool or at times on a chair due to their physical ailments. In some instances, inspecting officials were not aware of this permission having been obtained by the teacher and lash out at the teachers. Anitha described this scenario below and highlighted the lack of awareness amongst the inspecting officials, the Additional Educational Officers (AEOs)

> *Without knowing this, the stupid AEOs what they will do is… 'What is this? Only you are sitting on the chair is it? you alone are sitting on the stools is it? it seems they have said no chair in ABL…' that is how they will ask … Nee va po…*

The statement above was also a reflection of the lack of respect for teachers during monitoring which Anitha described through the words *Nee, Va, Po*[49]. Besides the practice of sitting on the floor, as it was crucial for the teacher to ensure that the students are seated in the right group with the relevant learning card, Mahalakshmi expressed a sense of fear when the grouping was incorrect

> *When that is not there, for us we will be scared when officers come… we have not done it properly*

[49]These words are examples of referring to individuals (in this case the teacher) in singular without respect. The same words can be used to express respect i.e. Neega Vanga Ponga

It is important to note from the statement above that the incorrect grouping arrangement in the classroom (supposedly) reflected the teacher's poor implementation of ABL. Similar to the grouping arrangement, the use of a low-level blackboard also is a representation of the extent to which the teacher is following the ABL practice in the classroom as reflected in Madhavi's statement

> *If the low (level) board is empty that will show how the teacher has done ABL…*

As the low-level board is another indicator of ABL, it was a key aspect during the inspection. However, at certain times, the written content on the low-level board might have been erased by another student, wrongly giving the impression that the student has not used the board at all. Ananya illustrated below this incident and goes on to highlight that officials did not accept such explanations

> *and there will be low-level board, in that low level he would have written, and another student would have erased something. So all this will happen, but nothing they will accept … 'why is it not there?'…*

The statement above suggests that officials at times were particular about certain requirements of the ABL classroom and perceived to have put many conditions for the teacher. These conditions were then reflected in the frustration and pressure felt amongst teachers. Malani explained this pressure with the example of the wireline that is used to display the artwork of the students. As the teacher was required to sign and date the work of the students, and to change it every month, it added to the workload of the teacher. Displaying old artwork on the wireline was questioned by the authorities

> *'why is it still there? You have to change it!'…. you have to change it. All this is the visit. When they come for visit so many things happen like this, there was lot of pressure*.

This pressure on teachers to meet these different requirements mounted to a sense of frustration and difficulty during inspections. As Malani reflected on her experience of being questioned during school visits; she goes on to say

> *For simple simple reasons we are so much answerable. This is not a big thing, but I cannot tell them as easy and they may not take it easy*

Since being answerable to the requirements of an ABL classroom was not an 'easy' task for the teachers, it frustrated the teacher when they were bombarded with different questions. In relation to being questioned about the low-level blackboard, or students not being in their groups, Ananya expressed her frustration and exhaustion from the practice of monitoring

this is not there! that is not there!' … the teacher they will Undu (ilana) aakidivanga[50] *(laughs)…*

This sense of frustration stems from the limited autonomy of the teachers in the ABL classroom. Aspects of control seemed to have featured regularly during the discussion of inspections. As mentioned in the material sections above, the progress of the student in the classroom is assessed by officials questioning the student on the content of the learning card and logo in which they are situated. The teacher was being evaluated based on the student's ability to answer the official that is explained by Devi

> *When they (official) talk to them, if they (the student) does not answer means, then our point only gets reduced. We are with another living being… whatever he/she says at that time, they will assess me based on that only and go.*

Reflecting on this process, Devi expressed her concern over the inability to control the manner in which she was assessed as a teacher in the ABL practice, which had not been the case with the traditional practice. Previously, she could present her work or *output* in *records or books* but in the case of the ABL, it came down to the students she had taught being able to show this. She expressed the lack of control over her evaluation in this statement

> *My output. It is not in my hands... it is not in the notebook. Where my output is… it is in the child's hands.*

The statement above highlighted the transition of control, in terms of assessing the capabilities of the teacher, from the teacher themselves (*it is not in my hands)* to their students (*it in child's hands*). Besides this perceived transfer of control to the student, since the performance of the students was rather unpredictable it added to the worries and concerns of the teacher. Since teachers were assessed based on the performance of the student, there was a need to account for the different factors that influence the student's ability to answer the official. Mahalakshmi states that at times students *would have not eaten* or *would have been absent for 15 days* and therefore will not in a position to perform well. Explaining such a situation she goes onto say

> *Yes, we are the ones who get caught. One day, if that child does well okay. If not, then it is difficult.*

Such *difficulties* are the outcomes of the unpredictable nature of student's performance that could be influenced by the factors mentioned above. This unpredictability was reflected in Kavitha's statement

[50] It is phrase in Tamil that has no literal translation in English. In this context it refers to the teachers being constantly interrupted and questioned by the officials during monitoring practice and therefore serves to express the pressure teachers face from officials during this practice

We cannot tell ...that because the child who studies well will not answer at that time, the ones who do not study will tell (laughs)

Overall, participants expressed a sense of frustration and pressure to meet the different requirements of the ABL classroom during inspection. Besides this workload for the teacher, the nature of the practice of monitoring that were described in terms of lack of control and unpredictability added to the concerns of the teacher. These interpretations of aspects of control (meaning) are discussed in relation to the materials and competences elements within the monitoring practice. Control emerged as each participant described experiences in relation to monitoring- pressure and frustration to meet different standards in relation to ABL practice; plus, the nature of monitoring which is not in the teacher's control and can also be unpredictable.

Participants indicated they were under pressure to perform different competences, such as sit on the floor or ensure students are in respective groups, and that they had to maintain different materials such as the low-level black-board, and a wireline for updated artwork. Teacher complied with these monitoring requirements as a link between these different competences and material were created yet were made to feel 'controlled' based on their expressed pressure and frustration. The significance of these material practices is discussed in section 6.1.3. This can be interpreted in terms of a form of limited autonomy for teacher, or in other words were 'controlled', towards the creating and maintaining of the practice of ABL in the classroom through the monitoring requirements. The aspect of control also seemed to emerge through the nature of monitoring practices. Devi suggested that the outcome of monitoring is based on the performance of the student rather than the teacher, something that had not previously existed when they were using the traditional method. This transition of control from teacher to student is similar to that discussed in relation to teaching style (section 4.3.4). As the performance of the student is influenced by different factors such as learning capabilities, social, cultural and economic settings, it adds to the complexity of the unpredictable nature of monitoring.

So, on one hand, some participants indicate that they were pressured to meet the requirements of monitoring, suggesting they felt more control was being exercised over them. This was interpreted in terms of the dominant presence of **practical evaluative agency** by responding to demands of the present and at the same time indicates fear of not meeting the requirements that indicate operation of future based **projective agency** (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). Whereas on the other hand, the participants also suggested that they couldn't control the outcome of monitoring since it went beyond their reach, as it lies in the hands of the (unpredictable) children. This uncertainty indicated practitioner interpretation in terms of future based **projective agency**, supported by a present based **practical evaluative agency** as they attempted to reduce that uncertainty by meeting the standards for monitoring (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). Either way, both dimensions of agency supported the practitioners in meeting the requirements for

monitoring practice, even though they are experienced in relation to different aspects of monitoring (i.e. the process of being frustrated and the potential outcome being uncertain). Overall, control exists along a continuum with regard to a monitoring practice that also contributed to the creation and maintenance of ABL practice. Monitoring practice is discussed in a similar manner for Puducherry.

4.5.2. Puducherry

In the case of Puducherry, data in relation to monitoring practices is limited due to the following reason. Participants stated that some of the inspecting officers of ABL, the Deputy Inspector of School (DIS) (SSA, 2009) did not favour the ABL method. Due to this, frequency of monitoring, in the form of inspections, for ABL was rather limited. As inspections did not periodically happens as in the case of Chennai, there was limited data in relation to this practice and therefore the teachers didn't elaborate on the details of monitoring practice i.e. what competences and material elements were inspected. Therefore, I will focus on the various interpretation's practitioners attributed to the monitoring practice.

In relation to inspections, the teachers were required to maintain the *achievement chart* that reflected the progress of the students based on the sequence of the learning cards (Jaya) and maintain different ABL related material: work of student exhibited on *low level blackboard,* student artwork on the wireline (*kambi panthal*) and ensure learning cards were *arranged in the trays correctly* (Keerthi). As previously stated, quite a few participants suggested that inspections did not happen very often i.e. *once a year* (Viji) or *once in 5 months* (Keerthi). Besides the frequency of inspection, participants stated that some of the Deputy Inspector of School (DIS) who visited the school did not favour ABL. Archana highlighted how the supervising officials *were very adamant about the old system of covering the syllabus and finishing the portion* and therefore were perceived to have had resisted the ABL practice.

Since ABL was a contrast to the above-mentioned traditional practices, Archana stressed how officials *are just (itching) to hate ABL after just listening to the word and they did not want to learn what ABL is.* This resistance and apparent disinterest from the supervising officials i.e. the DIS, was also voiced by Ram who stated that the DIS opposed ABL as s/he perceived ABL *not to have homework, the children were not touching the books* and had an overall opinion of *students not studying* through ABL. As a result of this underlying perception of ABL, the DIS may have not supported the ABL practice and this attitude seemed to have had an impact on the nature of the inspections of ABL in schools. Since one DIS is allocated to each zone in Puducherry, Ram described how 2 out of 5 DISs in Puducherry clearly disliked ABL

> *Now (if) I am the DIS, I like the scheme. I will go for the inspection and see how to improve the system. If I do not like it at all means…. Difficult. Like that 2 people were there… Hmmm in the 5, 2 of them were there, 3 were good.*

The DIS's resistance to ABL was likely to have had an impact on the implementation of ABL in schools of that respective zone. Hari also stressed on how the *SPD (State Project Director) at that time was not allowed to implement ABL in the schools of a certain DIS* as there was *internal politics.* This resistance from the DIS was reflected at the classroom level particularly when they went to inspect schools. Raji highlighted the inspector's limited awareness in terms of inspecting an ABL classroom.

> *When they come for inspection, it was not a big thing for us. They will ask the children, but another problem is Sir itself won't know… 'How to inspect this ma?' (Giggle)… like that.*

In such a case, Raji stated she would have to explain to the officials about the student reading from the learning card and the concept of logos. Roopa also shared below a similar experience and she expressed her concern about the ability of the inspector to inspect

> *'What is this logo?'… when they do not know that itself… how will they do inspection? They won't be able to do at all…*

Therefore, due to the DIS's disinterest or resistance towards ABL, it had an impact on their ability to inspect ABL classrooms. Hence this practice of monitoring did not seem to have a strong impact in the case of Puducherry, and therefore the discussion in terms of material and competence involved in this practice is also limited. Overall in the case of Puducherry, the monitoring practices were not as prominent and significant as in the case of Chennai. As discussed above, the individual who was part of this practice, the Deputy Inspector of Schools (DIS), had a crucial role to play. As far as the DIS was concerned, the participants clearly stated that 2 out of the 5 inspectors had a strong resistance to the introduction of ABL. By mentioning that these inspectors had a strong preference for the traditional practice of using textbooks and exams, this suggests that those inspectors may have operated from an **iterative dimension of agency** by drawing on past mental schemas that helped sustain meaning and order (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). As participants indicated that the inspectors perceived underlying assumption was that students *did not study* in the ABL method (Ram) it also had an impact in the frequency and quality of the inspections carried out by this individual. Inspections did not happen frequently and the inspecting officials who came were not even aware of the workings of the ABL method. Drawing on aspects of control, the practice of monitoring had a lower level of control and reduced impact in relation to other sub-practice of ABL in Puducherry, by comparison with Chennai.

4.6. Summary

In summary, this chapter has illustrated the nature of different practices that have contributed to creating and maintaining the ABL method over time. The constituents of practices (meaning, material and competences) as five forms of institutional work were explored in the context of Chennai and Puducherry.

First, practice related to training was a form of "educating" stakeholders with skills and knowledge, a creating form of institutional work (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006, p.221). The three sub-practices of ABL-teacher position, teaching style and assessment practice, together constituted the 'complexes of ABL' that resembled the practice work which refers to "actors' effort to affect the recognition and acceptance of set routines" (Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010, p.190) as practitioners engage in those sub-practices that support the shift from teacher-centred logic to learner-centred logic over time. This was based on the underpinning that practices are material enactments of institutional logics (Sahlin and Wedlin, 2008). As these practices are repeated over time by practitioner they become "embedded" and part of their daily work routine which also contributes to the maintenance of institutions through "embedding and routinizing" of practices (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). The last monitoring practice resembled the maintaining category of institutional work i.e. "policing" (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006, p.230) that ensured practitioners compliance in relation to the implementation of ABL. Overall the practice framework as an analytical tool brought to light the unfolding nature of institutional change highlighting how the change in the constituents of the practice (meaning, material and competence) and the links between them can bring about the replacement of teacher-centred logic of traditional method with learner-centred logic of ABL. Given the dynamic nature of practices, the data above highlighted how the links between the elements could be could emerge or not, strengthened or weakened as a consequence of different dimensions of agency of the practitioner that was highlighted through variations in the meaning element. Thereby, by adopting the practice framework, it provides a dynamic perspective of institutional change and accounts for the active role of practitioner within practices. The implications of these practices are further analysed in section 6.1 in Chapter 6.

Chapter 5 MATERIALITY AND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

Chapter 4 explored how institutional change (the replacement of teacher-centred logic with learner-centred logic) unfolded through five different forms of practice-based institutional work. As the key elements (competence, material and meaning) of these practices were analysed, this chapter aims to highlight the role of material with institutions and institutional change. Particularly, the maintenance and decline of the ABL practice in the context of Chennai and Puducherry, will be analysed from a material perspective. I begin by foregrounding how the textbooks and the learning cards are key teaching-learning material within the sub-practices of the traditional method and ABL method that were discussed in Chapter 4. By doing so, I exhibit the significance of the material dimension of the institutions i.e. traditional method and ABL. Since materials are considered to be carriers of the specific meaning framework i.e. an institutional logic (Jones et al., 2017), the role of material in relation to institutional change is then explored in two parts in this Chapter. The first part explores how the institution of ABL was maintained through various attempts to satisfy parents who emerged as key external stakeholders. Particularly, it explores how parental concerns regarding limited formative assessments and use of learning cards over textbooks were addressed through different practices of combing logics and establishing the legitimacy of learning cards. As this is similar for the case of Chennai and of Puducherry, as in Chapter 4, the data will be combined and identified for the respective cases. The second part of the chapter begins by highlighting the issues of the learning cards and textbooks within ABL that were addressed by a curriculum reform. This is followed by an exploration of the change in the role of these materials post the curriculum reform that was introduced in the case of Chennai but was not implemented in the case of Puducherry as outlined on pg. 84 and 86 in Chapter 3. The outcomes of the curriculum reform with the focus on the roles of material are discussed in the context of each location; the data shows that the reform contributed to the initial maintenance of ABL in the case of Chennai, whereas it contributed to a subsequent decline in the case of Puducherry.

5.1. Role of the textbook in traditional practices

The textbook is an important material element that supports the three sub-practices of the traditional system i.e. the teacher's position, their teaching style, and the assessment practice. In terms of a teacher’s position in their classroom, they are usually positioned in front of the class, explaining the content of the lesson from the given textbook. The supplied textbook supported the movement of the teacher i.e. either standing or walking around in the classroom, or sitting at the table and on a chair, since each student had their own textbook and was able to follow what the teacher explained in the lesson.

In terms of teaching style, as Murali (C) previously stated section 4.3.1, the importance of finishing the syllabus[51] that was present in the textbook indicated that the textbook was the main teaching material used in the classroom. Shruthi (C) also highlighted this significance

> *When we say the old method, the book only. The book, as usual, we will teach a lesson from the book…*

Besides being a significant teaching material, the textbook also helped the teacher *gather the attention of all the students* in the classroom (Madhu-C). Based on the passive role of the student (as described in section 4.3.1), the students *will study* what *the teacher taught from the book* (Raji-P). Besides supporting the teacher in terms of their position in the classroom and their teaching style, the textbook was also a significant teaching-learning material in terms of assessment practices. As highlighted in section 4.4.1 in Chapter 4, the textbook played a crucial role in the preparation of summative assessment practices such as examinations and tests (GoI, 1993). In terms of formative assessments, Ananya (C) mentioned how they gave students *homework* by asking them to *write what was in the textbook.*

So, textbooks helped the teacher design and provide different forms of assessments for their students. Overall, the textbook was a crucial material component in the three main sub-practices of the traditional system. Since "material objects can be important carriers of and mechanisms by institutional logics are sustained and transformed over time" (Jones et al., 2017, p.20) through practices that are material enactments of institutional logics (Sahlin and Wedlin, 2008), empirical evidence above indicates how the textbook in relation to different material based sub-practices exhibits how the teacher-centred institutional logics are operational through teacher's daily practices. When ABL was introduced, the learning cards in ABL took over as the predominant teaching-learning material used by the teacher, and their students, in the classroom. So, the textbook that was initially positioned as a key material component in the traditional practice was side-lined by the introduction of the learning cards. Before discussing how the textbook was positioned within the ABL practice alongside the learning cards, the significant role of the learning cards in relation to a sub-practice of ABL is discussed below.

5.2. Role of learning cards and textbooks in ABL

Although there were different learning materials in ABL (see section 3.3.2), this section particularly focuses on the role of the learning cards as a key material that supports the different sub-practices. In ABL, since the teacher was positioned on the floor next to their students, the use of learning cards implicitly forced the

[51] The syllabus refers to the topics that are expected to be covered by the teacher in the classroom. It varies amongst subjects/teachers and is a subset of the curriculum. On the other hand, curriculum refers to the overall content of subjects offered by a school. They cannot be adjusted easily and is prescriptive in nature.

teacher to sit down so they can teach the students with the learning cards. Preethi (C) stressed that since *everything is there in the card,* they could *only explain what the things are in the card by sitting down* and could not *sit on the chair or stand and teach the students.* As the teacher sat down to teach the students, the learning cards also facilitated an improvement in the relationship between the students and their teacher by reducing the physical distance between them. Swetha (P) illustrated this

> *'Miss what is this, how to do (this)?'… they started to bring the cards close to us, the fear in them reduced.*

Therefore, the learning cards not only justified the teacher sitting down on the floor, but also facilitated a change in the underlying meaning of that particular sub-practice i.e. change from teacher perceived with fear to the teacher being approachable. Besides supporting and improving the student-teacher relationship, the learning cards were key teaching-learning materials in the classroom as indicated in Preethi's (C) statement above (*everything is there in the card)*. Since the student engaged with these learning cards and progressed through them at their own pace, it resulted in each student (or at times 2 or 3 students in that respective group) working on a particular learning card. As a result of different students being on different learning cards, Padmini (C) stated how she was required to *go to each student and teach.*

Besides being an important teaching-learning material, learning cards were also designed to assess the students as they progressed from one learning card to another. As discussed in section 4.4.2 and 4.4.3 in Chapter 4, ABL cards were used for summative assessment such as examinations. Since one of the underlying principles of ABL was to reduce student's workload (UNICEF, 2012; 2015), formative assessments were structured in such a manner that students completed work in school. Pooja (C) stated this

> *From school when they come, he is not doing anything…. the reason is, he is studying here, he is writing here… all that he does.*

However, as participants indicated that parent's expressed concerns over their children *not at all doing any homework at home* (Keerthi-P) and complained that '*Teacher did not give homework!* (Padmini-C), the teachers provided the students homework based on the learning cards. This approach to satisfy parents is further discussed in section 5.3 below.

Overall, the learning cards supported the practice of sitting on the floor (teacher position) and the teacher paying attention to the students (individually or in small groups-the teaching style) and assessment practice (summative and formative) and therefore was a material representation of the ABL based learner-centred logic (Thornton et al., 2012) exhibited through these practices. Hence, it can be noted from the above discussion that the learning cards effectively supported the three sub-practices of ABL.

To conclude, building on the findings presented in Chapter 4, the sections above highlighted the significance of the textbook and the learning cards within the traditional and the ABL methods suggesting that materials played a prominent role in relation to the overall practice. Since practices are material enactments of institutional logics (Sahlin and Wedlin, 2008), in this context, the empirical evidence above indicates how the textbook in relation to three sub-practices of the traditional method are 'material enactments' of the teacher-centred logic. Similarly, the learner-centred logic is also exhibited through the learning cards in relation to the three sub-practices of the ABL method. The textbooks and learning cards were considered to be one of the material representatives[52] of the teacher-centred logic and of the learner-centred logic respectively within the respective practices.

Learning cards used within ABL practice in the case of Chennai were prepared based on the Tamil Nadu state board curriculum[53] that existed in 2003 (Sivapathi, 2012). Since the Puducherry education department prescribed to Tamil Nadu's state curriculum (Committee, 2005) learning cards distributed to schools in Puducherry were the same as Chennai. When ABL was introduced, the textbooks continued to exist alongside the ABL cards. Although the ABL learning cards were designed based on the curriculum present in the textbooks, the learning cards and the textbook were not compatible i.e. learning card content was simplified and sequentially arranged in a manner different to the way in which the same lesson was presented in the textbook. Malani (C) indicated this

> *There is no correlation between books and cards, in the beginning, stages… The cards, what is basic and required, based on the concept*

The cards focused on the concepts and skills to be gained by the student, yet they were designed in a simplified manner and were not (directly) compatible with the book. Note that the statement above referred to the connection between the material at earlier or *beginning stages* of ABL and the change in this relation between the elements will be subsequently discussed. This lack of correlation also resulted in *teacher's dilemma on* whether to use *card or textbook* due to *lack of clarity* amongst the teachers (Arjun- C). Subsequently, this had been clarified as teachers were told to teach students based on the learning cards (rather than the textbook) as it was a *government scheme* that *teachers had to follow* (Selvi-C). Since ABL was an innovative practice that teacher *had an interest in*, the *learning cards were given importance* and not that *much importance was given for the textbook* (Bhavani-C).

[52] Although there are other different teaching-learning material in relation to both the logics (as discussed in section 3.3.2), in this section I focus on only these two materials.

[53] Curriculum in this context refers to the subjects and the content offered by a school. They cannot be adjusted easily and is prescriptive in nature.

Teacher's *not caring about teaching the book* (Jayashree-C) indicated how the textbook was initially put aside as a teaching-learning material. Similar to the case of Chennai, Karthik (P) stated how teachers in Puducherry *didn't use textbooks that much and they used cards only.* The use of learning cards more than the textbook was also supported by the fact that teachers were instructed not to use the books. Govind (P) stated how they were told explicitly to follow the learning cards and not to *change to the book* while teaching the students. Overall with the focus remaining on the learning cards as the main teaching-learning material in ABL, it seemed *like the textbook didn't have much work* (Swetha-P).

Therefore, although the textbook and learning card existed with ABL, based on Shove's (2017) conceptualisation of roles of material, the learning cards occupied a more dominant-active role or 'device-oriented' role within the ABL practice and the textbook took on an 'infrastructural' role and was rarely used by the students and teachers. Due to the radical nature of change in material from textbooks to learning cards, parents, as external stakeholders, in the case of Chennai and Puducherry, struggled to comprehend this change. Their resistance and concerns particularly surfaced in terms of formative assessments with an underlying concern regarding the material used. As stated above, since parents complained regarding the lack of homework, it seemed to suggest that the parents were unaware of the underlying logic of ABL and seemed to prefer traditional practices of homework. As a result of the parents' complaints, teachers/practitioners were faced with an issue of institutional complexity; a situation where individuals or organisations face "incompatible prescriptions from multiple institutional logics" (Greenwood et al., 2011, p.318). Teachers did not give homework to their students since they were functioning on the basis of learner-centred logic whereas parents were complaining about this lack of homework and were operating from a teacher-centred logic about the nature of education. Parent's being external stakeholders of the school organisational set-up, it was important that their demands were being met (Meyer et al., 1981). As a result, teachers aimed to provide homework for the students based on the learning cards and managed this issue of institutional complexity by combing the teacher-centred logic (giving homework) and the learner-centred logic (based on learning cards). This is elaborated below.

5.3. The concern of external stakeholders: formative assessments and the underlying material

Formative assessments within ABL were not common since they were designed in such a manner that most of the work was to completed by students at schools (refer to Pooja's statement on pg.148) in line with principles of burden-free education (Anandalakshmy et al., 2007; UNICEF, 2012; 2015) and due to limited access to learning cards. The *cards will be in school only* and were not permitted to *taken home* (Padmini-C). Besides this underlying principle and access issue to learning cards in relation to formative assessment, participants elaborated on how parents complained about the lack of homework. Keerthi (P) stated this issue

> *Parents started coming and asking… 'they are not doing any homework at home at all? What card is this? they are not taking books…*

The underlying reason for this complaint was due to the socio-cultural significance of homework amongst parents. Homework served as a *symbol/identification of lessons being taught in school for the parents,* based on their *mental attitude* that if *no homework has been given then they (the teachers) didn't teach at all* (Surya-P). Due to this perception amongst parents coupled with the need *to satisfy parents* (Sanjana-C), participants indicated that they provided homework for their students. During the initial stages of ABL, a workbook was provided for students to practice the material present in the learning cards (Shanmugam et al., 2004) in Chennai and Puducherry but could not be sustained as the method expanded[54]. Besides the workbook, Swetha (P) stated that she will give *homework related to the card the student studied.* So, the students either wrote down *what is in the card in the note, that day* and *he do that as homework* (Padmini-C) or teachers will take a photocopy or *xerox of whatever is in the card and then gave it children* (Murali-C).

Therefore, the practice of formative assessment emerged as practitioners integrated the *material* (learning card), *competence* (teacher giving homework) and *meaning* (attempt to bring back homework as a symbol of teaching and learning) elements. By combining the teacher-centred logic of giving homework since it was a strong symbol of teaching and learning (competence-meaning link) along with learning cards of learner-centred logic (material), the teachers/practitioners seemed to have satisfied the parents to a certain extent. Even though homework was given based on cards, the concerns for parents, was more in terms of material used i.e. the learning cards instead of the textbook within the practice of homework.

Raji (P) illustrated how the student's use of the textbook was a symbolic representation of their learning at school which didn't happen as textbooks were not used in the ABL method

> *because a student when he goes home, what he did at school, he will show to the parents through the book. When it is like that, if there is no book means, parents thought they are simply going to school…*

Therefore, in the absence of the textbook parents were not aware of their child's learning progress at school as the learning cards were not considered as an equivalent substitute for the textbook. This was further complicated by the fact that students did not have access to learning cards at home. Roopa (P) explained that since *the teacher and student's work gets over in class itself* given that students were not using books

[54] Participants mentioned that although the workbook initially served as a good practice material for students, it was discontinued as ABL was expanded throughout the state of Tamil Nadu.

and were guided by the teacher through the learning card, she exclaimed that the ABL method did not reach the parents.

> *To parents, it did not go! 'This is what I studied today', like that children never done.*

So, when the parents questioned their child on what they had studied in school, Sanjana (C) mentioned that students would say '*I finished squirrel card*[55]*, I finished that card…'.* Since students were not using the textbook and instead of stating that they were studying from learning cards it was difficult for parents to comprehend. This was because the concept of learning cards as a teaching-learning material was rather new and a contrast to the textbook that parents were familiar with which was the main teaching-learning material in the traditional method (Alexander, 2001; Kumar, 2005). Since the student used the cards instead of the textbook in the ABL practice, this change in the material aspect left parents questioning the learning practice of their children as highlighted by Varsha (C)

> *Parents were not happy… 'How will they study without the book?'.*

The significant role of the textbook in relation to students studying was also reflected in Raji's (P) interpretations, particularly from parents' perspective. She states that parent identifying '*studies/studying'* when their child *comes home and learns from the book.* Given this strong identification of the textbooks with studying, she goes onto to state that when the *children were studying from the cards at school* parents assumed that *in government schools, they are not teaching anything.* This suggests that the change in material aspect in the practice of studying from textbooks to cards led to some parents to conclude that the schools were not teaching the students and thereby question the legitimacy of the teaching-learning practices within the school.

As a result of this, the limited awareness of learning cards amongst parents (that was rooted in terms lack of access and knowledge of learning cards) embodied a form of resistance the use of learning cards in the ABL practice. Jayashree (C) highlighted this

> *For parents, no matter what we taught with the cards, parents said 'They are not teaching in the book! They are not teaching in the book!' They didn't understand.*

Therefore, this lack of understanding amongst parents stemmed from a change in teaching-learning material i.e. from textbooks to learning cards with the introduction of the ABL practice. The lack of understanding was due to the deep-rooted beliefs around the textbook that occupied a sacrosanct position in terms of

[55] Squirrel card is a learning card that is represented by the squirrel logo. Animal logos were used for the subject of Tamil (Language) in ABL

learning and was perceived to be a source of knowledge and truth (Bhattacharya, 2009; Topdar, 2015) (as mentioned in section 3.3.1) also supported by access to the textbook. The access to the textbook was particularly crucial in terms of providing homework for the students which was not particularly easy with the learning cards. So even though, parent's initial resistance to lack of formative assessment in ABL was resolved through providing homework through learning cards, there was strong underlying resistance to the material itself exaggerated by lack of access and its characteristics of being simple and limited in comparison to the textbook in the case of Chennai and Puducherry. In order to resolve this material issue, the schools organised PTA meetings and classroom observation sessions during which parents were able to observe and understand how their children studied and learnt with learning cards instead of the textbook.

5.4. Establishing the significance of learning cards within ABL

Table 5.1 highlights the nature and outcome of the two strategies i.e. PTA meetings and classroom observation sessions in the case of Chennai and Puducherry

Strategies	Chennai	Puducherry
PTA meetings		
1. Bring awareness to parents	*Showed the cards and told the parents what system they followed* (Kavitha)	*PTA meeting will be there every month as it is in the circular. We have to keep it…. we told parents everything.* (Harish)
2. Learning cards main teaching-learning material instead of the textbook	*then we kept one parent meet (PTA meeting), 'children are not studying in the books, they are studying in the cards…., you should not compel them to study in the book* (Malani)	*We were going to implement cards and parents do not need to worry about the lack of books* (Keerthi)
Classroom observations		
3. Provided visual understanding of students using learning cards	*Then they saw…the 2nd std. child, saw the 2nd std. ladder, took the card and read it. Then only they understood it* (Varsha)	*Whatever is there in the book we gave it as a card. After that to a certain extent they understood* (Keerthi)
4. Learning cards better than textbook in relation to quality and speed of student's understanding	*Till now whether he studies or not, when that academic year finishes only, we can go to the next standard. But in this ABL methodology, if all steps he has passed, he automatically can take 3rd standard ladder and read* (Jyothi)	*when they watched one day, they understood….I explained, if it is the book, whether they study or not, he will not understand, if it is a card, if he finished that card only can he go to the next card* (Swetha)
Improved learning outcomes		
5. Evidence of improved student learning	*The newspaper they were able to read. All billboards they were able to read. They saw the results and they were convinced* (Arjun)	*Reading the newspaper and doing some addition when they go to shops* (Vijay)

Table 5.1: Strategies to deal with parent's resistance to learning cards: Chennai and Puducherry

By organising PTA meetings and classroom observation sessions, schools in Chennai and Puducherry attempted to establish the legitimacy of using learning cards instead of the textbook and ensured that parents were aware of the changes in teaching-learning practices.

PTA meetings and classroom observation sessions resembled the material legitimation strategy of 'certification' as practitioners (teachers) through verbal claims attempted to authenticate material (the learning cards) as key teaching-learning materials in relation to the pedagogical practice (ABL) (Jones et al., 2017). Through PTA meetings, the teachers attempted to establish the role of learning cards as key teaching material through verbal discourse. This discourse or rhetoric was also strengthened by inviting parents to observe how these learning cards were used in classroom practices. Exploring the nature of authenticity within the certification strategy, the teachers attempted to establish authenticity based on conformity to a social category (Lehman et al., 2019). These social categories of teaching-learning material emerge and are developed by the broader societal and institutional forces that organisations (such as

schools) conform to. By demonstrating how the learning cards were used by the students, teachers attempted to establish for parents the authenticity of learning cards as it had visible features of a teaching-learning material (i.e. students are able to learn and study from it, see point 3 in Table 5.1). Also, in relation to pragmatic legitimacy that is be demonstrated by certification strategy (Jones et al., 2017), teachers attempted to establish the usefulness of learning cards as they explained and showed parents how students are required to understand the material before they progressed in comparison to textbooks that allowed students to skip material (see point 4 in Table 5.1).

Overall, the certification strategy attempted to establish the authenticity and superiority of learning cards in comparison to the textbook. The authenticity of learning cards was also established through visual demonstration of learning cards conforming to the social category of teaching learning material. This material legitimation strategy underpinned by forms of authentication attempts to contribute to maintenance of ABL particularly by convincing key external stakeholders i.e. parents. It was interesting to note that over time, participants indicated that parents were also satisfied with their children learning through this practice as they witnessed an improvement in their child's reading and learning capabilities (see point 5 in Table 5.1). Although this may have contributed to the maintenance of the ABL practice, participants did mention that not all parents attended PTA meetings or classroom observation sessions. Besides have some external stakeholder not attending these meetings or being convinced, there remained other issues in relation to the learning cards and the textbook.

5.5. Learning cards and textbooks: Issues

The concerns and issues with regard to these two materials are shown in Figure 5.1 and are presented in the context of Chennai, since there was more regulation[56] over material aspects than in Puducherry.

[56] As discussed earlier (in section 3.3.2, p.85), Puducherry did not have their own independent body that developed the curriculum and relevant material. Puducherry followed and relied on the Tamil Nadu's curriculum and textbooks

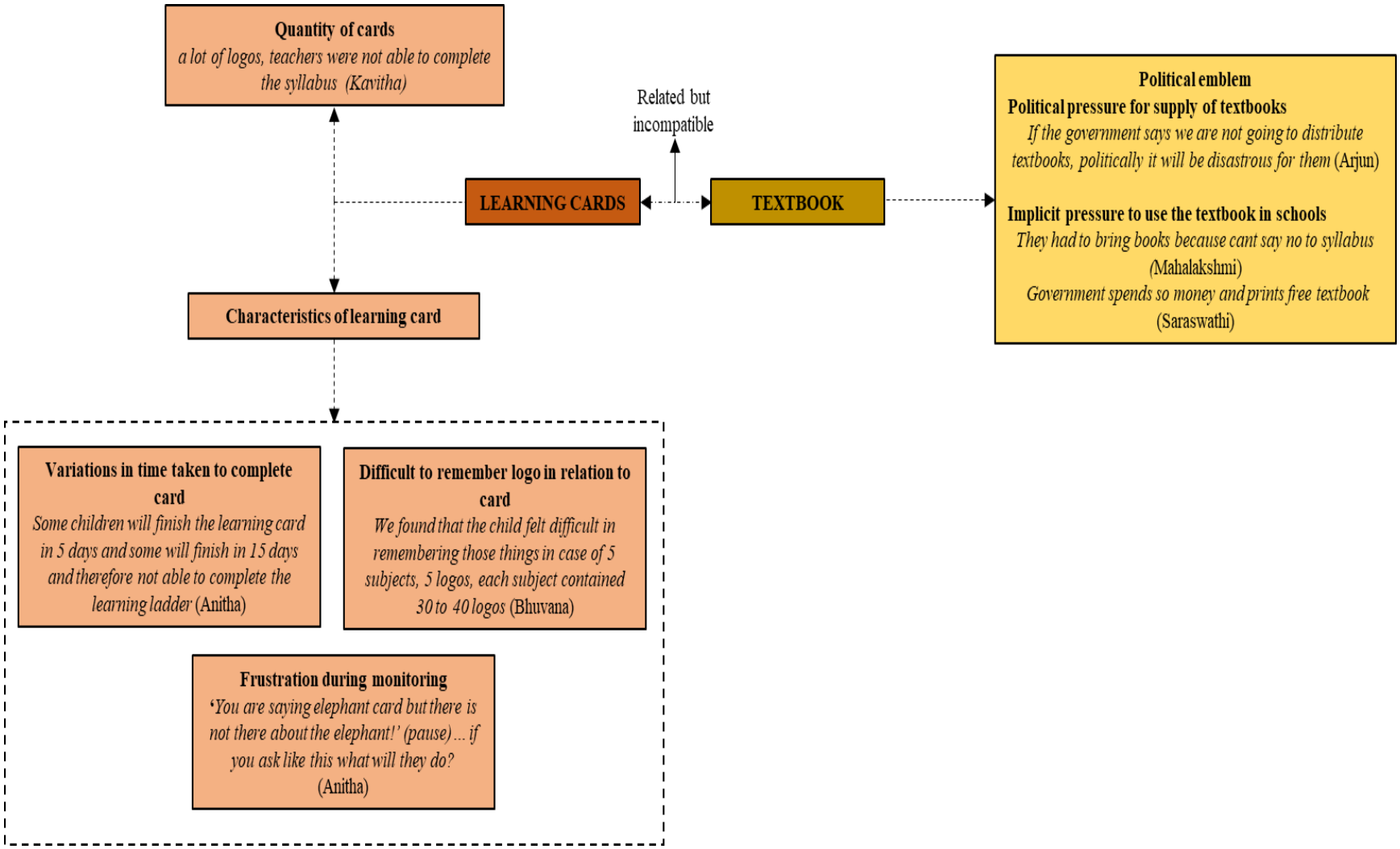

Figure 5.1: Characteristics of Textbook and Learning cards: Chennai

As highlighted in Figure 5.1 the learning cards raised their own set of issues in terms of quantity of cards which needed to be made available (a large number for each subject) and their characteristics (difficulty in remembering logos, concerns during monitoring) which had an impact on the overall ABL method. Although the learning cards were the main-teaching learning material in the ABL method, shelving the use of the textbook brought with it socio-cultural and political concerns. Besides being perceived as a symbol of teaching and learning for parents (discussed in 5.3) the textbook was also a political emblem, in the case of Chennai (highlighted in Figure 5.1). Since the distribution and supply of textbooks are politically warranted, the participants also indicated the felt pressure to use the resource.

The issues highlighted in Figure 5.1 resemble the functional and social pressures that constitute the antecedents of de-institutionalisation, developed by Oliver (1992). The functional issue with the learning cards indicated the practitioners' difficulty with using learning cards, a problem that had an impact on the practice of ABL and therefore resembles the functional pressures that explore "the instrumental value of practice" (Oliver, 1992, p.571). The social pressures took the form of societal forces described through the political and social significance of the textbook as a teaching-learning material in schools (ibid). From a practice perspective, focusing on the role of materials, although the learning cards served as the 'device' in the ABL method and textbooks as supportive 'infrastructural' material, the political and socio-cultural aspects of the textbook seemed to have pushed for it having a more active role in the ABL method. Citing the significance of the political impact of the textbooks, Arjun (C) stated that the solution was to make the textbook and learning cards compatible

> *Let us try to integrate the textbooks into the cards, so that can be used as additional reading material. This is what we tried… The textbook will be the companion of cards.*

In the state of Tamil Nadu, the Samacheer curriculum reform was introduced to unify the various educational boards[57] within the state into a single curriculum in an attempt to standardise the quality of education provided across the government and private schools within the state (GoTN, 2009). As the reform aimed to bring homogeneity in terms of the curriculum offered, it resembled formal pressure of "coercive isomorphism" as government schools had responded to this government mandate (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, p.150). In light of curriculum reform initiated within the state of Tamil Nadu, keeping this pragmatic approach in mind, the textbooks and the learning cards were made compatible during the curriculum reform, and ABL was modified as Simplified- ABL (SABL) (Sivapathi, 2012) i.e. the textbooks were used alongside

[57] Before the introduction the Samacheer curriculum, the state of Tamil Nadu had various educational board such as Matriculation board, Anglo Indian board and Oriental board that were offered in only private schools whereas the state board was offered in government and some private schools.

the learning cards as key additional teaching-learning material, and the compatibility of these materials also helped maintain the practice of ABL. Although SABL was implemented in Chennai, it was not so in Puducherry due to the curriculum reform. This is presented below.

5.6. Impact of curriculum reform

The impact of the curriculum reform had different outcomes in the case of Chennai and of Puducherry. In the case of Chennai, ABL was modified to SABL and the section below will discuss the material changes and briefly highlight implications of these changes in relation to SABL practice. Although SABL was maintained for a considerable period, a subsequent curriculum reform contributed to the decline of SABL in Chennai and will also be discussed. In the case of Puducherry, SABL was not successfully implemented as there was a change in the curriculum from the state (i.e. Tamil Nadu's Samacheer curriculum) to central (i.e. Central Board of Secondary Education- CBSE) board. Although attempts were made to design learning cards in relation to the CBSE curriculum, they failed to do so and hence it led to the decline of the practice. Therefore, the followings sections will highlight how this curriculum reform brought different outcomes in relation to the ABL method in the context of Chennai (maintenance and decline of SABL) and Puducherry (failure in attempt to maintain ABL) through a material perspective.

5.6.1. Chennai

5.6.1.1. Change in materiality: SABL

As previously stated, the role of the textbooks and learning cards was modified in the SABL method. Table 5.2 below highlights the key material difference between ABL and SABL.

Material change	ABL	SABL
Logos of learning cards	Each subject had their own logos	Common logos introduced for all subjects
Textbook and learning cards	It was not actively used by students and teacher; the learning cards were not compatible with textbook	The textbook actively used as student and teacher; learning cards and textbook made compatible through logos such as classroom and textbook logo

Table 5.2: Material differences between ABL and SABL

This strategy of making the textbook and learning cards compatible resembled the *material mimicry* approach in order to improve the legitimacy of the material (learning cards) (Carroll, 2015; Jones et al., 2017). In this instance, the learning cards resembled the contents in the textbook, a source which was already recognized as legitimate teaching-learning material. It is important to note that not only were the contents between the two materials similar, but they were also used together within the practice of SABL based on different logos such as classroom or textbook logo (Malathy et al., 2012). The link between the

learning cards and textbooks resembled authentication established by *connection* between an entity and a person, place or object through symbolic connection (Lehman et al., 2019) in addition to the previously established authentication by *conformity* to the social category of teaching-learning material. Overall the legitimacy of learning cards in the case of SABL was strengthened through material mimicry with the underlying support of authentication through connections and solved the functional and political concerns discussed in section 5.5. Since this material mimicry strategy has also been recognised as 'creating' form of institutional work by Lawrence and Suddaby (2006), this material change contributed to the creation of SABL or in other words maintained a restructured version of ABL.

Particularly, actively using the textbook along with learning cards (**material**) was supported by the teachers developing the necessary skills of using both the materials in the classroom (Balamurugan and Usharani, 2016) (**competence**) and positive interpretations (**meaning**) of this material change i.e. teachers indicated that giving importance to *both the learning cards and textbooks satisfied parents* (Sanjana) and *the textbook were used to give homework* (Sanjana). Based on the three-element practice framework, the material changes not only brought about a change in the competence and meaning element of the SABL practice, but also strengthened the material-competence link supported by positive interpretations (meaning) of the SABL practice which contributed to the emergence of the SABL method. Although these material changes also brought about negative interpretations in relation to SABL practice (which also occurred in the case of ABL sub-practices as highlighted in Chapter 4), the SABL practice continued to exist for a considerable period. However, when another curriculum reform was introduced in the state of Tamil Nadu, SABL declined. This is discussed below.

5.6.1.2. The decline of SABL: transformation of learner-centred logic

The SABL practice was carried out in the context of Chennai until the academic year of 2017-18. When a curriculum reform was introduced in the 2018-19 (Sivgami Sundari, 2018), it contributed to the disruption of the SABL method. Participants indicated that the new method was being introduced in order to *adopt to the current trend* (Selvi) and work towards *improving the skills of future generation* (Devi) by introducing a method that was similar to SABL, but without the use of any learning cards. In the new teaching-learning methodology, although the textbook would serve as the main teaching-learning material, students continued to learn through activities while being spread across different groups (Sivgami Sundari, 2018) thereby retaining aspects of the learner-centred logic. Although the SABL practice declined due to the introduction of this new practice (that can be attributed to institutional reasons)[58], I aim to highlight the role of material (textbooks and learning cards) in relation to the disruption of practice. Since learning cards were crucial for

[58] The new pedagogy was the result of a new top down initiative taken by the education department within the state.

the continuity of SABL practice, with the introduction of the new curriculum, textbooks were modified and as a consequence, the learning cards needed to be changed. This 'knock-on' effect was highlighted in Padma's statement below

> *If 1st std. new syllabus comes next year, they have to give us new cards. If the new card comes only we can follow if not we will use the book*

However, the official indicated that *learning cards were not printed* (Anitha) and therefore due to lack of materials, the SABL practice declined. This reflected the 'coercive' work that was used in terms of disconnecting any sanction for the participants with regard to rules or material (in this case the production of learning cards) that contributed to the disruptive nature of the institutional work (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). Participants indicated that learning cards would be used as additional teaching-learning material within the new pedagogical method.

Although the finding above indicated how the production and supply of learning cards were crucial for the continuity of the SABL practice, when delving deeper another interesting pattern emerged which underpinned this change. Based on the findings presented above, with the introduction of SABL, there seemed to be a connection between the learning cards, the textbook, and the curriculum, links which can be further explored by Shove's (2017) conceptualisation of the role of materials. As indicated in Table 2.6 in Chapter 2, with respect to the ABL and SABL method, the learning cards occupied a 'device-oriented' role as it was actively used within practice, the textbooks taking on an 'infrastructural' role and served as supportive material and the curriculum serving as a 'resource' to be consumed by students. However, given the change in curriculum, the 'resource-based' role impacted on both the 'device-oriented' and the 'infrastructural' roles of material. Within this empirical context, a change in the curriculum during 2012 and 2018 brought about different results with regards to ABL and SABL. This is further explored in section 6.2.2.2 in Chapter 6. The following section discusses the impact of the curriculum reform in the context of Puducherry.

5.6.2. Puducherry

Up until this curriculum reform in 2012, since Puducherry was still following the Tamil Nadu state education board (Committee, 2005), ABL was expected to be restructured and implemented as Simplified ABL (SABL) as in the case of Chennai. With the introduction of the new curriculum in Tamil Nadu, the Puducherry education department decided to follow the CBSE curriculum (a central government board) rather than the Samacheer curriculum (a Tamil Nadu state government board) (Jaisankar, 2013). This turn towards the CBSE curriculum happened due to several reasons and is discussed below.

5.6.2.1. Change in materiality: CBSE

The adoption of a different curriculum in schools in Puducherry was considered one of the main reasons that contributed to the decline in the ABL method. The different features of the CBSE curriculum in terms of its quality and the nature of the curriculum were underlying reasons for the switch. In terms of quality, the CBSE curriculum was perceived to be *better when compared to state curriculum* (Vijay) as studying the curriculum *enabled government school children to take up competitive exams* (Priya). As mentioned on pg. 72 in section 3.3, the CBSE curriculum is designed to ensure students develop the necessary skills and capabilities to perform well in competitive exams (Jaisankar, 2012; Sridhar, 2014) and was underpinned by the learner-centred logic. Therefore, in this context, the quality and standard of the CBSE curriculum was evaluated in terms of the students doing well in subsequent competitive exams.

Besides the quality, since the CBSE curriculum was designed and taught in the English language, it was preferred over the Tamil Nadu state board curriculum which was initially designed to be taught in only in Tamil in government schools. While discussing the probable issue that impacted the ABL practice, with regards to the medium of instruction, Surya illustrated how parents had a strong preference towards private schools (that did not use the ABL practice) since their medium of instruction *will be English*. It is important to note that while ABL was implemented in Tamil both in the context of Chennai and of Puducherry, SABL although initially introduced in Tamil was later implemented in Chennai in English over the due course of time. In Puducherry, although there were attempts to develop ABL cards in the English medium smart schools[59] as well (Josephene, 2008; Mallady, 2009; SSA, 2011), ABL was predominant in Tamil medium government schools. Surya also mentioned that since students from private schools were more successful in the future as they *scored more marks* and *got job based on those marks* in comparison with those who attended government schools, people *began to think that the system* (in government schools) *was not good.* Therefore, the parent's preference for private schools over those run by the government seemed to be based on the medium of instruction i.e. English vs Tamil. This was highlighted by Raji

> *if children go to private schools, they will have good English knowledge, they can handle exam well, in government school it's fully Tamil…*

Participants described this preference as a *craze for English* as they stated that many parents wanted *English medium* (Govind, Keerthi) (Jaisankar, 2013). So, in order to account for this strong preference for English over Tamil, Anjana illustrated how the CBSE curriculum was the *next choice* since the *government school were Tamil medium* based on *Tamil Nadu textbooks* and they could *not create textbooks.* This highlighted

[59] Smart schools were schools that taught the central curriculum (NCERT syllabus) in English medium. There were 85 smart schools in the Puducherry and Karaikal region.

the limited autonomy in terms of curriculum choice and material (i.e. textbooks) in the case of the Union Territory[60] of Puducherry. As mentioned on pg. 85 Puducherry did not have their own curriculum design board (SCERT)[61] and relied on the Tamil Nadu's SCERT who designed the curriculum and textbooks. Given that the Union Territory of Puducherry had other regions located in different states i.e. Puducherry and Karaikal were located in the state of Tamil Nadu, Yanam in Andhra Pradesh, and Mahe in Kerala, the schools in those regions followed the respective state board education (Dominique, 2014). As Anjana described this difference in educational boards within regions of the Union Territory, she stated that the CBSE curriculum was adopted to *standardise* the education system. The differences that arose from following different state education boards were perceived to be a problem for the regions of the UT as there were three different mediums of instruction in schools i.e. Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam based on the respective state. Therefore, "in order to bring all the govt. schools throughout Union Territory of Puducherry under one umbrella of the uniform curriculum" (Sangathan, 2014, p.8) the Union Territory of Puducherry adopted the CBSE curriculum. Besides these factors, Vijay indicated there were institutional environment pressure to follow the CBSE curriculum

> *…central government itself starts saying all UT's are implementing CBSE syllabus…Why not the Puducherry?*

Therefore, this institutional environmental pressure indicated the further informal pressure of coercive isomorphism as the education department of Puducherry aimed to comply with the standards that exist in the broader institutional environment (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991; Hanson, 2001; Rowan and Miskel, 1999) i.e. the pressure to adopt the CBSE curriculum was so as to be in line with other Union Territories (CBSE, 2018). This pressure was also combined with the intention to achieve homogeneity across government schools in the four regions of the Union Territory of Puducherry, and also helped them improve education standards, through quality and medium of instruction of the concerned curriculum and thereby gain recognition and legitimacy amongst the public (Jaisankar, 2013) which contributed to their survival (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). This pressure was also supported by the limited autonomy of schools in terms of designing their own material i.e. textbooks. As a result of the observed perceptions in terms of quality and in the nature of the CBSE curriculum, supported by institutional features (isomorphic forces), the Union Territory of Puducherry decided to implement the CBSE curriculum for primary schools "paving

[60] A Union Territory is an administrative division (like a state) in India. They are usually governed by the central/union government. Puducherry is an exception since it has its own legislature and cabinet of ministers due to special constitutional amendments; it is given partial statehood

[61] SCERT (State Council of Educational Research and Training) is a state level apex body which in charge of designing the curriculum and textbooks.

the way for uniform curriculum throughout UT of Puducherry" (Sangathan, 2014, p.7). Given the change in the curriculum (or change in 'resource-based' role of the material) the SSA department[62] of Puducherry designed learning cards based on the CBSE curriculum in an attempt to continue the ABL method in their schools (SSA, 2009; The Hindu, 2010). This is discussed in the section below.

5.6.2.2. ABL practice for CBSE curriculum: issues and decline

As participants discussed the introduction of the CBSE curriculum, some of them mentioned that the learning cards were designed in English according to the new CBSE curriculum, in order to continue with the ABL method. Rani indicated this

> *the schools implemented CBSE, they thought of proceeding in ABL method as Tamil medium schools followed ABL. So for that they thought of doing CBSE cards for ABL …*

She went onto say that the learning cards were designed for std. 1 and std. 2 with the assistance of *academics from Tamil Nadu* who helped them work on it. Also, trainers from *Rishi Valley*[63] who were well versed in the designing of ABL material, assisted the teachers and officials from Puducherry (Priya). With the valuable input from academics from both Tamil Nadu and Rishi Valley, teachers and officials worked in teams to design learning cards for all the subjects in English. Given that the CBSE curriculum was using the textbooks designed by the central government curriculum board (Josh, 2014), Rani stated that they *we went to NCERT* (National Council of Education Research and Training)[64] *for approval* of the CBSE-based learning cards and was subsequently approved. She stated that the learning cards were printed (post-approval) for over 200 primary schools in Puducherry. However, even though the primary material for the ABL method was prepared, it could not be implemented. In elaborating the reason, Vijay highlighted a clash in the pedagogical practice prescribed for the CBSE curriculum in comparison with the previous Tamil Nadu state curriculum. He elaborated by saying that this clash of practice surfaced when a CBSE approved training agency came to train and instruct the teachers of Puducherry (Sangathan, 2019), since they used a different pedagogical approach

> *they came for training from Mysore, they said a different pedagogy. They were not using ABL pedagogy…So, we couldn't able to implement it.*

[62] The SSA department, a body that existed within the education department was in charge of implementing of ABL method in schools in the case of Chennai and Puducherry.

[63] The protypes of ABL material and methodology was developed in Rishi Valley Education Centre.

[64] NCERT is an autonomous organisation that assists and advice state and central government policies and also plays an active role in publishing textbooks and supplementary material

Since this training agency followed the prescribed pedagogy for the CBSE curriculum, Vijay indicated that they could not adopt the ABL method for the CBSE curriculum. The learning cards that were designed and approved by NCERT were instead used as additional *teaching aids* (Anjana) by teachers who were following the CBSE curriculum. The newly designed learning cards were side-lined and the CBSE textbooks *were considered enough* (Archana). This indicated how adopting the CBSE curriculum resulted in going back to textbooks as the main teaching-learning material, rather than the intended learning cards being used.

In reference to the three-element practice framework, although the suitable learning cards based on the CBSE curriculum (material) were prepared based on the understanding of improving standards of education and continuing the ABL method (meaning), the issue emerged in terms of not having the opportunity to train teachers with the respective material (competence). As previously highlighted, the training sessions which are crucial for practitioners to develop the necessary competences to work with the respective material, based on different interpretations, did not happen in the case of Puducherry. As depicted in Figure 5.2 although competence-meaning link was created (train teachers based on CBSE curriculum with purpose of providing quality education), since the meaning-material link (trainers did not attribute learning cards as a key teaching-learning material) and the competence-material link (could not train teachers to work with ABL material) was not established during teacher training, this contributed to the disruption of ABL in Puducherry.

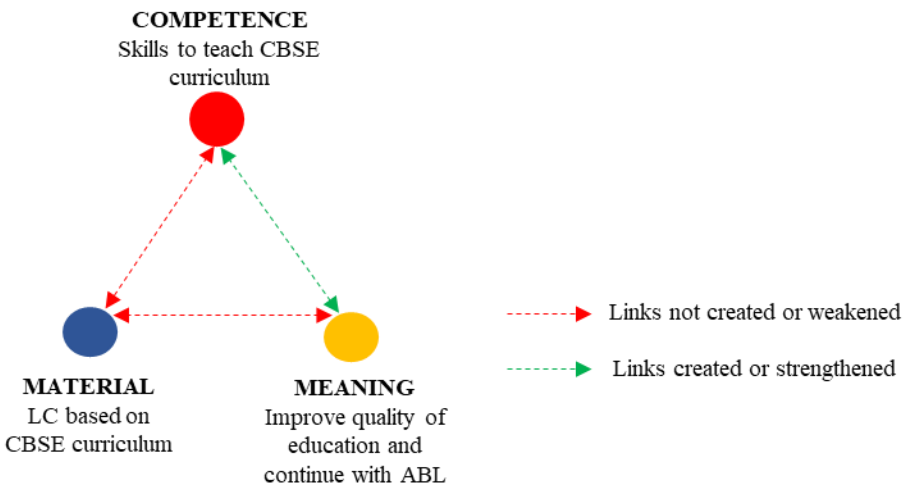

Figure 5.2: Practice related to training for CBSE curriculum

This finding supported the significance of educating stakeholders as a form of institutional work which was crucial for the emergence of the institution (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006) i.e. the emergence of an ABL method based on the CBSE curriculum. Besides the significance of training, this section has also

highlighted the importance of the material aspects of the practice. As discussed in the case of Chennai, the underlying relationship between the role of materials i.e. device-oriented, infrastructural and resource-based, as presented by Shove (2017) also emerged in the case of Puducherry. The roles of the material within the context of Chennai and of Puducherry are further analysed in Chapter 6.

5.7. Summary

In summary, this chapter has clearly indicated the importance of the textbook and of the learning cards through the two parts. First, it highlighted the significance of a textbook and the learning cards as key material, and as representations of the traditional and the learner-centred logics in relation to different practices. The maintenance of ABL was attributed to managing instances of institutional complexity in relation to formative assessment practice by providing assessments based on learning cards and by establishing the legitimacy of learning cards. However, based on underlying significance of the textbook and learning cards with ABL method, the second part of the Chapter highlighted that curriculum reform impacted on the role of these two materials, and that change had led to the initial maintenance (restructured as SABL) and decline of SABL in Chennai and a rather rapid decline of ABL in the case of Puducherry.

Chapter 6 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter seeks to answer the over-arching research question of this thesis: *How does a practice-based approach to institutional work contribute to the understanding of institutional change*? As this question was approached by addressing two research sub-questions that were separately addressed in chapters 4 and 5, this chapter that analyses and discusses those empirical findings is structured in a similar fashion.

Section 6.1. 'Practice-based institutional work' reviews the empirical findings of Chapter 4 that address the first sub-question: *How can the three-element practice framework contribute to understanding the micro-dynamics of institutional change?* The empirical findings highlight how the practice-based institutional work depicted through the three-element framework illustrates the unfolding of institutional change. In discussing the elements of the framework and their links, the framework attempts to capture the complex and dynamic nature of change. This dynamic approach to institutional change responds to calls for adopting a micro perspective and complex approach to institutional change with a focus on practice (Micelotta et al., 2017; Smets et al., 2012) and simultaneously contributes to exploring the 'coalface' of institutions (Powell and Rerup, 2017). Dimensions of agency serve as additional analytical lens contributing to the dynamic nature of practices and accounting for the active role of the practitioner.

Section 6.2. 'Materiality in maintaining and disrupting institutions', summarizes the findings of Chapter 5 in order to highlight the significant role of materiality within institutional change and thereby address the second sub-question: '*How do materials contribute to the maintenance and disruption of institutions?'* Role of materials in relation to maintenance of ABL are discussed in light of managing institutional complexity (depicted by combining logics) and legitimation strategies of materials. In relation to the disruption of institutions, the interrelation between the various roles of material- *device-oriented, infrastructural* and *resource-based* conceptualised by Shove (2017) is explored. As this sub-section underscores the role of materials within institutions, it thereby contributes to a growing demand to account for materiality within institutional work (Hampel et al., 2017), institutional logics (De Vaujany et al., 2019; Jones et al., 2017) and institutional change (Pinch, 2008).

Section 6.3. 'Contribution: Facets of institutional change' brings together three main contributions of this research in relation to various attributes of institutional change; how the institutional unfolds through practice-based institutional work, accounting for the role of practitioners and agency and finally emphasising the role of material within institutional change.

6.1. Practice-based institutional work

Chapter 4 identified the different empirical practices as forms of institutional work (purposive actions of individuals) aimed at creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions based on studies that drew on Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) taxonomy of institutional work. These practices were common in both the context of Chennai and Puducherry and are presented in Table 6.1

<table>
<tr><th>Empirical practices</th><th>Category of institutional work</th><th>Forms of institutional work</th></tr>
<tr><td>Practice related to training</td><td>Creating</td><td>Educating stakeholders: educating individuals with skills</td></tr>
<tr><td>Three sub-practices of ABL</td><td rowspan="4">Creating and Maintaining over time</td><td rowspan="4">Practice work: Actor’s efforts to recognise and accept a set of routines

Embedding and Routinizing: infusing normative foundation into the daily routines of practitioners</td></tr>
<tr><td>1. Practice related to the teacher’s position</td></tr>
<tr><td>2. Practice related to teaching style</td></tr>
<tr><td>3. Practice related to assessments</td></tr>
<tr><td>Practice related to monitoring</td><td>Maintaining</td><td>Policing: compliance through monitoring</td></tr>
</table>

Table 6.1: Forms of practice-based institutional work

Source: (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006; Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010)

Through training, practitioners (teachers) were expected to develop the necessary competences and understanding required to implement ABL in the classrooms. The classroom observations and other ABL related material were identified as significant material elements that supported this practice. Thereafter, three sub-practices of ABL were illustrated: teacher’s position, style and assessment that were crucial to indicate how institutional change (replacement of teacher-centred logic with learner-centred logic) was brought about through the enactment of these sub-practices by the teacher. In order to support the effective performance of ABL practices in the classroom, official monitoring was necessary to ensure ABL standards were maintained. By adopting the three-element practice framework developed by Shove et al (2012), these forms of institutional work were analysed as practices and illustrated through different elements that constitute the practice- meaning, material and competence. As interpretations in relation to the meaning of practices vary amongst practitioners, various dimensions of agency were adopted to contribute to the dynamic nature of institutional work and change. The empirical findings of each of these practices and its implications in relation to extending or contributing to the literature are presented below.

6.1.1. Training: Educating practitioners

The practice related to teacher training in the cases of Chennai and Puducherry was crucial to the creation and subsequent emergence of the institution of ABL since it enabled practitioners to acquire the necessary skills (i.e. enactment of different competences in relation to use of different material) to perform ABL. As this practice involved “educating actors in skills and knowledge necessary to support the new institution”, it resembled *educating*, a creation form of institutional work identified by

Lawrence and Suddaby (2006, p.227) within their institutional work taxonomy. Within this empirical work, training was a cognitive-based institutional activity that aimed to change the meaning system of teachers in relation to their pedagogical practice. Therefore, training was instrumental in ensuring teachers (as practitioners) acquired the knowledge and skills that underpinned the ABL practice, and importantly learned how to use and work with the key ABL material i.e. learning cards, and the learning ladder. Particularly, materials such as ABL material used during training, the video clips of ABL practices and observations of ABL classrooms, played a crucial role in providing the practical and visual knowledge for teachers who were being trained in those respective skills. This suggests a prominent role for materials in the institutional work of educating stakeholders, as discussed in Monteiro and Nicolini's (2015) empirical work on prizes. The authors elaborate on the significance of materiality in the practice of educating stakeholders in terms of award ceremonies[65], newsletters, databases and reports that help to educate individuals by enhancing the quality of communication and the exchange of ideas amongst them in relation to those prizes. Particularly, these award ceremonies that served as a 'locus at which learning exchanges are triggered' (ibid, pg. 71) resembled the participants observing ABL classrooms in schools as part of their training; these sessions facilitated interactions between teachers and that contributed to their understanding of ABL. Therefore, my analysis provides evidence of materials playing a crucial role in the institutional work of educating stakeholders and thereby responds to calls for further exploring the role of material within institutional work (Hampel et al., 2017).

The adoption of the practice framework provided an opportunity to unpack the constituents of the training practice or in other words 'educating stakeholders', as the institutional work. By training practitioners to develop necessary skills to work with ABL material, in terms of practice framework, competence- material link was to be established. Since practitioners drew on multiple interpretations in relation to training, the variations in meaning elements were analytically explored. As discussed, in under the meaning element of section 4.1.1 and 4.1.2, negative interpretations of practice were seen to be expressed through the participants' fear and anxiety in relation to the ABL practice. This indicates the presence of **iterative agency** as the participants drew on their past habits and routines as there were attempts to change the schemas (the cognitive frameworks) in relation to their practice (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998), thereby indicating resistance to change. On the other hand, a positive interpretation was exhibited through a willingness to learn, and this professional commitment suggests the operation of a **projective agency** which facilitated the reconfiguration of schemas through hypothesization*;* the participants envisioned ABL practice as being an innovative teaching-learning practice which would improve students' learning (ibid) and therefore were tending to support the change of practices. In other words, these meanings attributed to training practices based on different dimensions of agency

[65] Award ceremonies served as material aspect at which individuals could collaborate and provide opportunities for further associations.

contributed to creating the institution of ABL. Besides these negative and/or positive interpretations, the visibly stronger regulatory presence reflected through professional commitment and limited agency in the case of Chennai, in comparison with Puducherry, seems to suggest that although practitioners deliberate the implementation of ABL, they indicated compliance in terms of carrying out the practice (using their practical judgement) indicating that they were aware of the potential consequences of deviation. Thereby, it indicates the presence of a **practical evaluative agency** (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998) that supports the creation of the ABL practice.

Overall, this part of the analysis identifies the key role of material, the significance of competence-material link and variations in meaning element contribute to institutional work of educating the probable practitioners of ABL. These findings not only contribute to other empirical studies that have highlighted the significance of training stakeholders in the institutionalisation of management fashion (Perkmann and Spicer, 2008) and new practices in a construction company (Daudigeos, 2013) but also aim to extend such work by accounting for the role of materials within the education of stakeholders. In this empirical study, once teachers had received the ABL training, they were required to implement the practice in the classroom through various sub-practices in relation to ABL. These are discussed below

6.1.2. Complexes of ABL practice: Practice work and embedding routine

In Chapter 4, I discussed three sub-practices of ABL: practice related teacher's position, teaching style and assessments. Within this research, these sub-practices are conceptualised to constitute the 'complexes' of ABL since they are closely integrated and have dense practice relations in terms of being sequenced (Shove et al., 2012). For instance, in a particular situation, the teacher is expected to be seated on the floor next to students, teaching the content of the learning cards to individuals or in small groups, and later providing them with assessments[66]. As these sub-practices within the 'complexes' of practice are 'black-boxed', this empirical work attempts to open this up for two key purposes: firstly, to highlight how the learner-centred logic (exhibited through ABL) was actively infused into the day to day teaching and learning practices within the classroom environment. This is carried out through practice work, "the actors' efforts to affect the recognition and acceptance of set routines, rather than simply engag[ing] in those routines" (Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010, p.190). In this context, teachers as practitioners make the effort to implement the different sub-practices of ABL, and this takes the form of purposive action or institutional work which contributes to the creation of the ABL practice within their classrooms. Therefore, in this context, it can be said that practice work comes under the category of creation form of institutional work. Secondly, by exploring these respective sub-practices within the

[66] This sequence may not always be the case since teachers are required to teach students who are different stages of learning; some of them might be beginning a new concept and some students might be taking assessment of the same

traditional method and in ABL method, my thesis indicates how institutional change (the replacement of teacher-centred logic with learner-centred logic) is carried through as a change in the daily routines of the teachers within their classroom set-ups. Overall, the unfolding nature of institutional change defined by the replacement of institutional logic is highlighted through the institutional work of practice work by opening the 'complexes' of the ABL practice. Delving further, the change in these sub-practices is explored through the change in the elements (meaning, material and competence) that constitute the practice. Since these sub-practices constitute the ABL practice in classrooms as depicted in Figure 6.1 their contribution in relation to the literature will be discussed as 'complex of ABL' in the form of practice work and will be presented at the end of this section. The characteristics of these sub-practices and change in elements are discussed commonly for the case of Chennai and Puducherry.

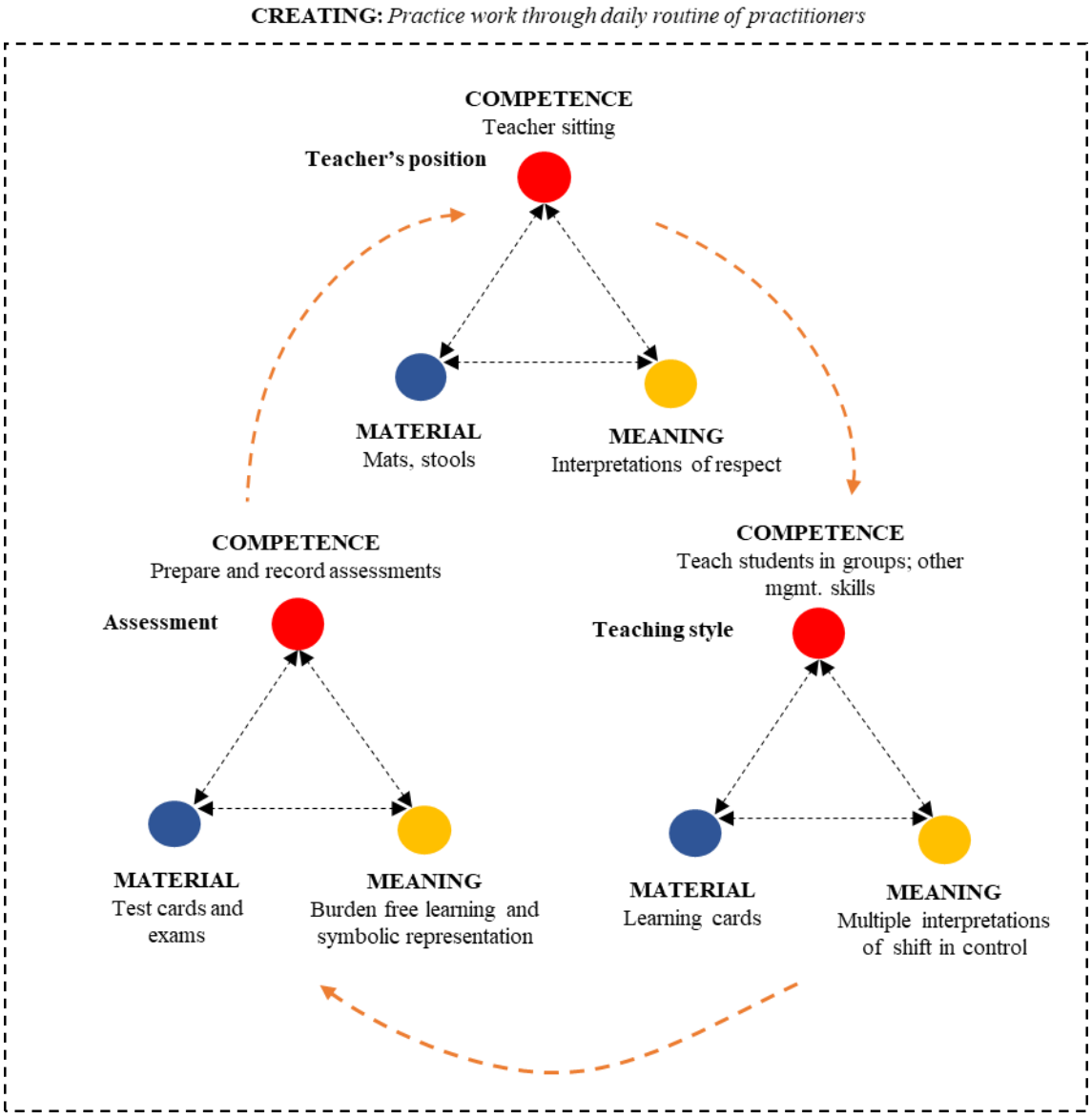

Figure 6.1: Three sub-practices that constitute the ABL 'complexes' practices

Practice related to the teacher's position

The first sub-practice section describes the teacher's position in the classroom. In relation to the traditional method, there was a considerable physical distance between the teacher and the students. This separation was supported by the table and chairs (the material), the students' perceived fear of their teachers that formed the basis of respect (the meaning), and the teacher being required to stand or sit in front of the classroom (the competence). However, with the introduction of ABL, in the cases of Chennai and Puducherry, the physical distance was considerably reduced as teachers were required to sit down in close proximity with the children in their class (competence) on the mats or in some instances on small stools (material), and the arrangement was based on the underlying belief that respect for teachers emerged in terms of being approachable and affectionate (positive meaning) or a supposed lack of respect as students were likely to become undisciplined (negative meaning). Figure 6.2 below highlights the change in relation to the respective elements that constitute the practice.

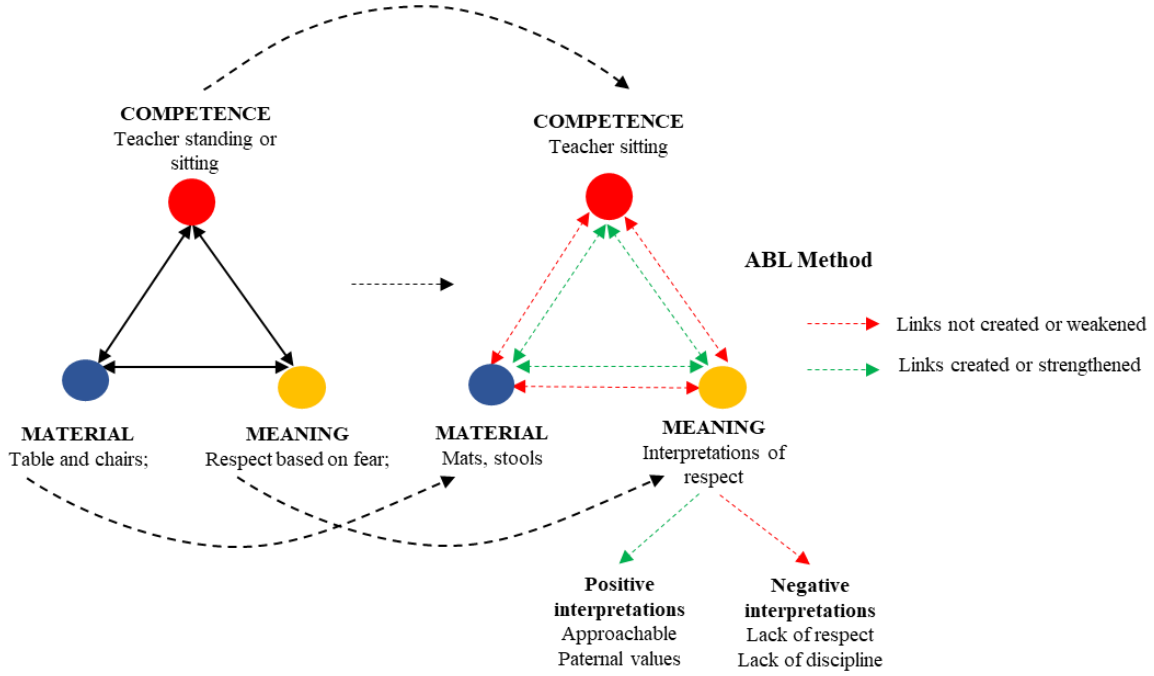

Figure 6.2: Change in elements in practice related to the teacher's position

Given that there was a change in relation to all elements that constitute the practice, the nature of change itself was rather radical. Focusing on the materiality of this sub-practice, in the traditional method, the table and chair was not only a source of convenience for teachers (i.e. the teacher could sit and teach as well) but also substantively supported the distance between them and students; it was also symbolic of their identity as mentioned by Jyothi (C)- *teacher means tables (and) chair.* As a result of this, replacing the table and chair with mats and stools had a significant impact not only in terms of each teacher's physical ability to maintain this new required position (sitting on mats required more effort and strain) but also in terms of their more distant identity (from sitting at a table and on a chair, and being perceived with respect due to fear reinforced by the distance, to being 'reduced' to sitting on mats on the floor or

a stool, and thus being perceived with respect which grew out of affection). The significance of this materiality is also discussed in relation to the monitoring practice in section 6.1.3. Therefore, the change in the material had a very strong impact in terms of competence and meaning, particularly the latter, since material and meaning had such a strong link. As a result of the drastic nature of this change, it led to resistance amongst practitioners as it required more effort (competence) and also required a change in interpretation (meaning). As the underlying interpretation (meaning) in relation to this sub-practice transitioned from respect emerging from fear to respect emerging from affection, not all practitioners had similar interpretations of respect or benefits with their new circumstances.

The variation in the meaning element (positive and negative interpretations) is highlighted by drawing on Emirbayer and Mische (1998) different dimensions of agency. As discussed in section 4.2.2 and 4.2.3, by sitting on the floor or stool, the teachers may have drawn on positive interpretations (affectionate and approachable from which respect emerges) based on **projective agency** and therefore the links between the elements were likely to be created or strengthened over time (green arrows in Figure 6.2). However, by drawing on negative interpretations (lack of respect or discipline from which respect may not emerge) due to the dominance of the **iterative agency**, the links between the elements may have not been created or weakened (red arrow in Figure 6.2), an impact which could affect the performance of the practice. Overall, these dimensions of agency not only suggest the more active role of the practitioner within the practice but may also imply how positive meanings can support the emergence of links between elements or negative meanings can break or weaken links between elements, thereby affecting the emergence of the practice.

Practice related to teaching style

Once the teacher is seated on the floor next to some of the students, they are required to teach and monitor all those who are seated in six groups across the whole classroom. The details of this practice are illustrated in the second sub-practice of ABL i.e. the teaching style. In the traditional method, the teacher was expected to teach all the students together at the same time (competence) with the use of textbooks, a blackboard and flashcards (material), based on the interpretation of control associated with this style (meaning). With the introduction of the ABL practice, in the case of Chennai and Puducherry, teachers were expected to teach their students in small groups, or one on one, and were required to develop the skills of managing multi-graded groups (competence), to work with the learning cards (material), and their effectiveness was based on a combination of positive and negative interpretations of this shift in control, from managing an entire classroom to focusing on small groups of students while others were not being controlled directly. The change in the respective elements is displayed in Figure 6.3.

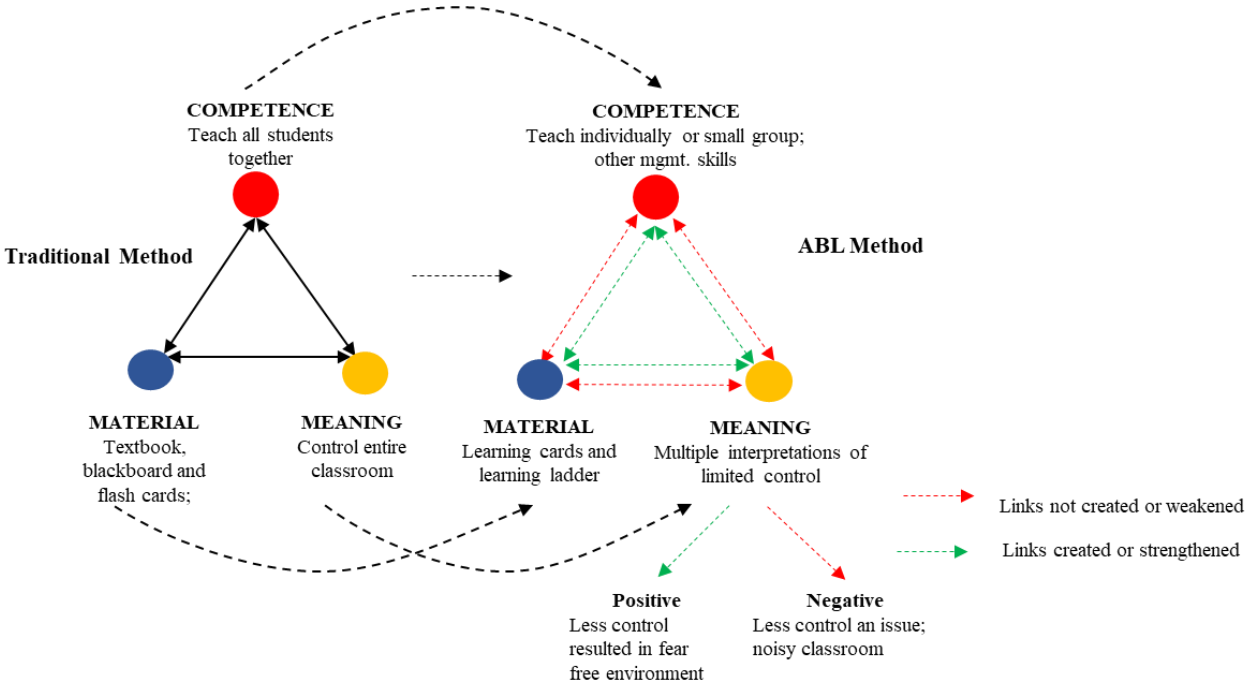

Figure 6.3: Change in elements in practice related to the teaching style

Teachers particularly struggled with this teaching style, which is discussed here through aspects of control. In the traditional practices, the participants indicated that they had more control since the attention was directed from student to teacher (teacher-centred logic), but with the introduction of the ABL practice, the teacher had less control over the classroom since the attention was directed from teacher to students (learner-centred logic). With the attention transitioning from one individual (the teacher in a traditional set-up) to many individuals (students spread across different groups in an ABL set-up), the control was more dispersed resulting in the teacher as a practitioner having to develop varied classroom management skills (an aspect that participants interpreted as requiring more effort). Besides more effort being essential in terms of developing this new competence, they expressed concerns regarding the supply and maintenance of the learning cards for teaching the students (material). In this context, access to this material was crucial for the enactment of this sub-practice as it also supported the different competences of the practitioner.

Due to the change in the aspect of control, it resulted in varied interpretations amongst the practitioners were explored through Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) dimensions of agency. The positive interpretations suggested the dominant presence of a **projective agency**, one that indicates that participants notice the benefits of their reduced control resulting in a fear-free learning environment and may have created/strengthened links between the elements of practice (green arrow in Figure 6.3). In contrast, the negative interpretations in terms of teachers criticising the nature of the loud classroom environment in an ABL set-up suggested the dominant presence **iterative agency** as the participants continued to draw on their past habits and beliefs (e.g. the classrooms were expected to be quiet) that impacted the links not being created/ weakened (red arrow in Figure 6.3) within the practice. Overall,

these links would have impacted the emergence and maintenance of this sub-practice. Post teaching the students in the classroom, the teachers were required to carry out assessments for students which is discussed below.

Practice related to assessment

The final sub-practice of ABL refers to the assessments that each student takes in order to evaluate the skills they are expected to have gained by completing a sequence of learning cards and were assessed through test cards. While exploring the role of the summative assessments in section 4.4.1 (formative assessments were discussed in Chapter 5) in the cases of both Chennai and Puducherry, within the traditional method, the assessment by written examinations was perceived to be a recognised symbol of student learning and progress (GoI, 1993) (meaning), where teachers were required to prepare the question papers for these assessments after the given curriculum had been completed (competence and material). However, given the socio-cultural significance attached to examinations as an assessment method, this presented a situation of institutional complexity since teachers were being met with "incompatible prescriptions" (Greenwood et al., 2011) from parents, who expressed concern regarding a lack of traditional examinations in the ABL method . As a result of this, besides ABL test cards which served as assessment cards, at times, examinations were also adopted in the ABL practice, in both locations. The change in the elements of assessment practice is exhibited in Figure 6.4

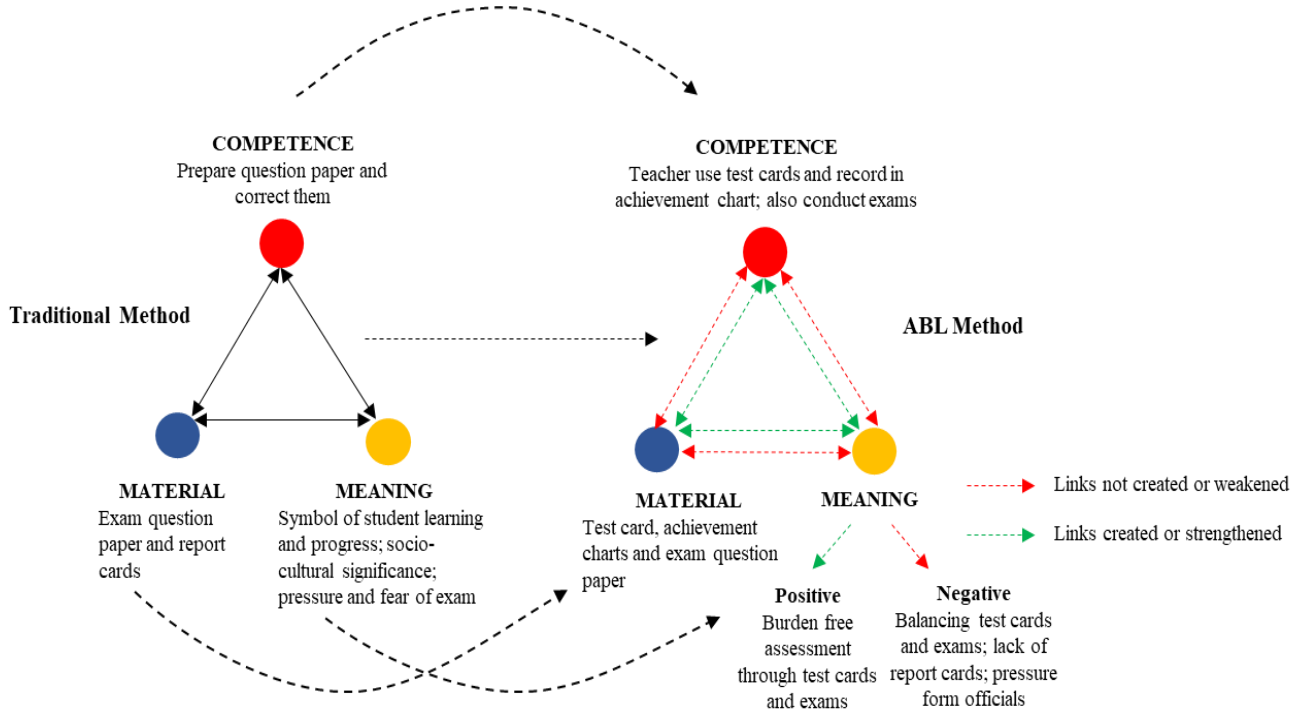

Figure 6.4: Change in elements in practice related assessment

The material practices of different institutional logics (i.e. test cards based on learner-centred logic and examinations based on teacher-centred logic) were to be combined in both the case of Chennai and Puducherry. In both cases, teachers as practitioners prepared exam question papers (the symbol/material of traditional practice) based on the content of the learning cards, and this, therefore, was not only to satisfy parents but also to carry on with the ABL practice. In this instance, logics were combined by teachers in terms of the material aspects of their practice i.e. exams representative of teacher-centred logic but were actually based content of learning cards (completed by students), representative of learner-centred logic. Drawing on the positive interpretation regarding the benefits of burden-free assessment suggested presence of **projective agency** and interpretations of conducting test cards and examination suggested operation of **practical evaluative agency** of getting the job done; these forms of agency may have contributed to creating or strengthening the links between the elements (green arrow in Figure 6.4) and as a result enabled the teacher to enact the practice. The links between these elements at times were not made or weakened (red arrow in Figure 6.4) when teachers struggled to achieve balance conducting examinations alongside the test cards, aggravated when they were questioned about the slow progress of the students from time to time by inspecting officials (in the case of Chennai; see pg.134) and pressure and complaints from parents regarding the absence of rank cards (in the case of Puducherry; see pg.135). This indicated presence of **iterative agency** as interpretations were related to assessments routines of the past. The theoretical contribution of this finding is discussed under section 6.2.1.1

Overall, the three sub-practices discussed above indicated how ABL as a 'complex' practice emerged during its implementation by teachers, who were the key practitioners. These sub-practices of ABL are recognised as the legitimate activities and practices of ABL (Mahapatra et al., 2009; NCERT, 2011) and therefore enactment of these practices account for the creation or implementation of the ABL method within the classroom. It is also important to bear in mind that these material practices reflect the learner-centred logic (that forms the basis for ABL) and therefore play a key role in highlighting the unfolding nature of institutional change through a practice work (institutional work) lens. The empirical findings discussed above indicate that practitioners are involved in practice work as they enact the sub-practices of ABL that support the creation of ABL practice, and thus contribute to and extend other empirical works that have elaborated on the role of practice work in institutional change and creation (Gawer and Phillips, 2013; Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010). By adopting the three-element practice framework, this empirical work extends and delves deeper into the nature of practice work by underscoring the constituents of practice, the meaning, material and competence. This dominant practice-based perspective towards institutional work provides 'theoretical clarity' (Hampel et al., 2017, p.560); an aspect that lies in the background of the above-mentioned practice work studies.

For instance, although Gawer and Phillips (2013) identified different external and internal practices that acknowledge the role of material within them, they were large discursive and relational in nature. For example, while discussing internal practice work such as creating demand for microprocessor and stimulating third party software development carried out by Intel in response to the shift in logic, their findings are limited to how these practices were implemented through the active role of top management in convincing organisational member and managing tensions due to change in logic. They remain silent on what constitutes this practice of creating demand for micro-processes and how it emerged and therefore gloss over the components of this institutional work. In contrast, this current empirical research focuses on the nature of institutional work, foregrounds the role of material and skills of the individuals and links between them, in order to obtain a granular view of the emergence of institutional change (Smets et al., 2017) contrary to the conventional mechanistic or dramatic process of institutional change (Delbridge and Edwards, 2007). The framework brings to light how the elements that constitute the practice change to support the shift in logics; *competences* are abstracted and reversed through training and enactment, with practitioners being granted access to key *material,* and *meanings* are de- and re-classified (Shove et al., 2012). As these elements change, the active integration between the elements (i.e. their links) is carried out by the practitioners themselves. Aspects of these links are highlighted through variation in interpretations of practice that are explored through dimensions of agency. The implications of these agency dimensions are highlighted in terms of the links being made between the elements as a result of either creation and emergence, or lack of emergence, of practice.

Besides these sub-practices forming key aspects of practice work in creating the ABL practice, practice work can also support the maintenance of the institution over time (Zietsma and Lawrence, 2010). The

practice work over a period of time results in these sub-practices becoming embedded in the daily routine of practitioners. This embedding is achieved through repeated enactments of these practices by practitioners, brought together by the links between the elements being renewed, and it, therefore, contributes to sustaining the practice (Pantzar and Shove, 2010; Shove et al., 2012). Drawing on maintenance category of institutional work, it resembles *embedding and routinizing* which is referred to as "infusing normative foundations of institutions into participants' day to day routines" (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006, p.233). The underlying norms in reference to teaching and learning based on the learner-centred logic will be infused regularly and repeatedly over a period of time, resulting in practitioners reproducing these practices. This finding supports existing studies that have highlighted the role of embedding and routinizing in the institutional maintenance within the medical profession (Currie et al., 2012), in managing institutional contradictions in order to maintain institutions (Bjerregaard and Jonasson, 2014), and as part of theorisation towards the maintenance of regulatory initiatives (Mena and Suddaby, 2016). Besides an embedding and routinizing process that plays a crucial role in suffusing norms into daily practices, these practices are also supported by a coercive mechanism i.e. monitoring, that controls and monitors the enactment of these practices. This is discussed in the section below.

6.1.3. Monitoring ABL: Policing

The practice related to the monitoring process discussed the differing requirements and standards (in terms of competences and maintaining different material aspects) that teachers were expected to enact and maintain in their classrooms with regards to the ABL practice. Since teachers were required to comply with these requirements, which were inspected by monitoring officials, this practice of monitoring resembled the "policing" category of institutional work (maintaining) which Lawrence and Suddaby (2006, p.230) defined as "ensuring compliance through enforcement, auditing and monitoring." Policing, as a form of institutional work was crucial as it served as a coercive mechanism to maintain institutions through active work, instead of assuming the reproductive nature of institutions. Thereby accounting for the dynamic nature of institutions conceptualised in terms of practices, Shove et al. (2012) states that monitoring (either carried out by the individual or others) is an integral part of performance of practice as it contributes to the maintenance of the practice-based question as to how practitioners use the 'feedback' from their past performance.

Given the significance of monitoring in relation to the maintenance of institution/practice, within this empirical context, it was different in the case of Chennai and Puducherry. In the context of Chennai, the findings indicate the ways in which teachers were evaluated in relation to different aspects of their ABL practice, particularly in relation to competences and materiality. In terms of competences, such as sitting on the floor with their students, ensuring that the students are seated in groups and using the appropriate learning cards, and monitoring their progress on the learning ladder, all aspects were assessed by the visiting officials. The findings also seemed to suggest the significance of materiality as they were

symbolic of the enactment of ABL practice. For instance, the material element in section 4.5.1 highlighted how different ABL material such as use of learning cards and achievement chart, a wireline to display the student artwork, and a low-level blackboard that indicates the learning status of students, were all aspects inspected during the monitoring process since the presence and use of these materials suggested the appropriate enactment/implementation of ABL practice by teacher. It was also interesting to note that, the presence and use of any material common to the traditional method i.e. the presence of a table and chairs in the classrooms or the use of the blackboard by teachers, was also questioned by the monitoring officials, which suggests that these material practices seemed to represent the teacher-centred logic and were not being seen as compatible with ABL. These findings support the underlying belief that material practice represents institutional logic (Sahlin and Wedlin, 2008) and therefore monitoring as a form of institutional work re-enforces the institutional logic (learner-centred logic) that underpins the institutions (ABL). Overall these empirical findings highlight the role of materiality towards the maintenance of ABL practice through the institutional work of monitoring (or policing) and thereby responds to calls for accounting for the material element in forms of institutional work (De Vaujany et al., 2019).

In terms of the interpretation of the monitoring practices, control emerged as an underlying theme that existed along a continuum for teachers. At one end, the participants were expected to control different aspects of monitoring, by exhibiting the expected competences and use of materials in a certain manner, suggesting the dominant presence of a **practical evaluative agency** of 'getting the job done' while facing the pressures of official monitoring, and also suggested aspects of a **projective agency** as they anticipated the potential consequences of not meeting the expected standards (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). At the other end of the continuum, the participants seemed to suggest that they have limited control and that this was exhibited through their uncertainty in relation to evaluation since it was based on the performance of the students and not their own performance as teachers. This suggests the dominant presence of **projective agency** as teachers hypothesised the possible outcomes of the monitoring process, but also demonstrated a **practical evaluative agency** as they aim to meet the requirements of that monitoring (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). The presence of these forms of present and future dimensions of agency suggests that the participants' overall aim was to meet the inspection standards, and as a result, contribute to the maintenance of the ABL practice.

In the case of Puducherry, the significance and impact of monitoring were rather limited. Besides indicating the limited frequency of monitoring/inspections in schools, the participants also mentioned how the monitoring officials i.e. DIS (Deputy Inspector of Schools) did not favour the ABL practice as the students used learning cards instead of books and did not do homework. Their perceived opinion of ABL indicated a strong preference for the traditional method, suggesting the operation of an **iterative agency** as the officials seemed to draw on past habits and routines with regards to teaching-learning practice (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). This perceived resistance of monitoring officials towards ABL

was also reflected their attitude during inspections (as discussed in the meaning element in section 4.5.2). As a result of the officials' perceived resistance to ABL practice, it is believed to have weakened the impact of monitoring as a coercive mechanism that contributed to the maintenance of ABL.

Therefore, the empirical findings in relation to this practice support and extend other scholarly work that has indicated the significance of monitoring or "policing" as a strong coercive mechanism that contributes towards the maintenance of institutions (Bjerregaard and Jonasson, 2014; Micelotta and Washington, 2013). Mena and Suddaby (2016) in their empirical work on the theorisation of practice and roles towards institutional maintenance of a regulatory initiative in the apparel industry, identified the significant and stable role of policing work to enforce norms and conform compliance of institutional arrangements through categories of control. Although the authors identified different constructs such as programmes and procedures, unannounced audits in relation to policing, they do not investigate the constituents of those constructs. For instance, the actual practice of compliance with those codes or programmes remained unexplored. This is also observed in relation to Currie et al. (2012) study on institutional maintenance of health care professionals, where policing was identified as a form of institutional maintenance work but which does not delve into the practice of monitoring/policing itself. Therefore, accounting for the significance of material practices that were considered as symbolic of compliance to institutional arrangements (as discussed above) can provide a more comprehensive perspective of policing as a form of institutional work. Since I have discussed the nature and constituents of the forms of practice-based institutional work in relation to creating and maintaining ABL, their contributions within the broader institutional theory and practice literature will be discussed towards the end of the chapter. The next section highlights the role of materials in relation to the maintenance and disruption of the institution of ABL in relation to the second research sub-question as stated on pg.166.

6.2. Materiality in maintaining and disrupting institutions

Focusing on the significant role of material in relation to institutional change, Chapter 5 illustrated how textbooks and learning cards that served as representative of teacher-centred logic (basis of traditional method) and learner-centred logic (basis of ABL method) respectively played a crucial role in the three sub-practices of ABL. The chapter goes onto elaborate how it contributed to the maintenance and disruption of ABL. In both contexts, ABL was maintained by managing institutional complexity that arose in relation to formative assessment and by establishing the legitimacy of learning cards. Institutional complexity (a situation of incompatible prescriptions from multiple logics) arose due to parents wanting formative assessment for their children (based on teacher-centred logic) and teachers ensuring students are not burdened with homework (based on learner-centred logic). As a result of this clash, the teachers combined the learner-centred logic represented through learning cards (material) and teacher-centred logic of doing a formative assessment (meaning and competence) to resolve the issue of institutional complexity. In order to convince the parents, the legitimacy of learning cards through

PTA meetings and classroom observations were carried out by teachers as forms of material legitimation strategies. The disruption of ABL that was triggered by a curriculum reform driven by institutional forces resulted in changes to the role of the textbooks and the learning cards that lead to an earlier decline of ABL in case of Puducherry than Chennai. The conceptualisation of roles of material by Shove (2017) foregrounded the nuances of materials in relation to institutional change and disruption.

These empirical findings that foreground the role of materiality in relation to maintaining and disrupting forms of institutional work is analysed and discussed in relation to relevant literature in the two sub-sections below.

6.2.1. Materiality in the maintenance of ABL

6.2.1.1. Formative assessment and institutional complexity

Similar to the cases of summative assessment practices, in the case of Chennai and Puducherry, institutional complexity was encountered by teachers (who were functioning based on learner-centred logic of ABL) as they received complaints from parents (who were functioning based on teacher-centred logic or traditional method) in relation to formative assessment practices such as homework for their students. Based on the significance of homework serving as symbol of teaching and learning traditionally carried out in schools for parents (discussed in section 5.3), the schools were required to satisfy the needs of parents as they contribute to the social legitimacy of organisations such as schools that operate within a strong institutional environment that needs to maintain the trust and confidence of the public (Meyer and Rowan, 2012; Scott and Meyer, 1991). As a result, the teachers engaged in the practice of combining the learner-centred logic and teacher-centred logic, that involved in giving students homework (teacher-centred logic) based on the learning cards (learner-centred logic). In terms of practice, the teachers were required to exercise the skill of giving students homework (competence) by using the ABL learning cards (material) in order to account for the perceived parental concerns regarding homework, a traditional practice that had for years served as a symbol of teaching and learning (meaning). By taking on a practice perspective in relation, this empirical work contributes to the under-researched field of managing institutional complexity through the ‘mundane’ or ‘day to day’ work activities or practices of individuals (Jarzabkowski et al., 2009; Smets et al., 2012) and therefore responds to calls to “delve deeper into the dynamic pattern of complexity” (Greenwood et al., 2011, p.334). In the context of this research, combining logics to manage institutional complexity in relation to both formative and summative assessments contributed to creating and maintaining the institution of ABL, a finding which is supportive of the literature on how managing institutional complexity contributes to stability and the maintenance of institutions (Jarzabkowski et al., 2009; Smets and Jarzabkowski, 2013).

6.2.1.2. Material legitimation strategy

Although the logics that were contradictory were accommodated and constructed to be compatible in the practice of formative assessment, there existed a deep-rooted issue in relation to the material dimension of the logics i.e. learning cards and textbooks. This deep-rooted issue was highlighted in section 5.3 i.e. parents' resistance to the use of learning cards instead of textbooks as key teaching-learning material that initially surfaced through the practice of formative assessment. As a result, teachers organised PTA meetings and classroom observation sessions in the case of Chennai and Puducherry, in order to establish the legitimacy of the learning cards as key teaching-learning material, instead of the standard textbooks in their schools. These strategies are identified as 'certification' strategies in relation to material legitimation strategies (Jones et al., 2017) and aim to authenticate or legitimise the learning cards as key teaching-learning material. Within the certification strategies, one of Lehman's (2019) forms of authenticity based on conformity was also established that strengthens the material legitimacy of learning cards.

Certification strategies through verbal claims (PTA meetings) that demonstrate the pragmatic legitimacy focusing on the usefulness and appropriateness of material (learning cards). Besides PTA meetings, classroom observations were organised for parents in order to obtain a visual understanding of the use of learning cards in actual classroom practices. As mentioned in section 5.4 of Chapter 5, within the certification strategy, authentication of learning cards was exhibited through conformity to social category i.e. conformity of the learning cards to the category of teaching-learning material. This form of authentication, also known as 'type authenticity' (Carroll and Wheaton, 2009) is established through a relational approach to authenticity i.e. an individual (the teacher) claiming something (learning cards are legitimate teaching-learning material) that is either accepted or rejected by the relevant other (parents) (Peterson, 2005). This relational form of authentication through conformity can also contribute to the maintenance of institutional as indicated by Colombero and Boxenbaum (2019) in their study on the role of authentication of artefacts in the institutional maintenance of architectural heritage. Their study goes beyond the role of material in verbal discourses and practices in maintenance work (the focus of this research) and identifies forms of authentication in relation to qualities of artefacts that contribute to the maintenance of the institution. However, the empirical findings of this research partly contribute their call for accounting for the role of authentication as institutional maintenance work.

These empirical findings contribute to the stream of work that identifies the supportive role of material in relation to the institutional maintenance (Jones and Massa, 2013; Lanzara and Patriotta, 2007) and can also extend such work by drawing on aspects of authentication which may strengthen the legitimacy of materials. For instance, in their empirical study on church buildings, Jones and Massa (2013) identified two legitimising processes: Institutional Evangelism (creating and protecting new practices) and Adaptive Emulation (translated traditional to new practices) as forms of institutional work that may benefit from drawing on different forms of authentication presented Lehman et al. (2019) to highlight

how the nature and process of authentication adds to these processes of legitimacy within this empirical work. Therefore, the empirical findings based on PTA meetings and classroom observations highlight the significance of certification and form of authenticity as material strategies that contribute to the maintenance of ABL.

Therefore, the two sections discussed above highlight the significance of managing institutional complexity through the day to day practice and the authentication of material that together contribute to the maintenance of the ABL practice. Overall these findings respond to the call to account for the role of materials/artefacts in relation to institutional work i.e. maintenance (Colombero and Boxenbaum, 2019; Greenwood et al., 2017; Jones and Massa, 2013).

6.2.2. Materiality in the transformation of ABL

As the section above highlighted the role of material in the maintenance of ABL practice, this section particularly explores how the change in material aspects of ABL resulted in different outcomes in the two empirical cases i.e. Chennai and Puducherry. I first briefly discuss the pre-existing conditions which have contributed to the material change, followed by a case discussion highlighting the impact of the material change in relation to the ABL practice.

6.2.2.1. Institutional forces

As discussed in section 5.5 of Chapter 5, the learning cards and textbooks as teaching-learning material carried various functional, political and social issues within the institution of ABL. These issues were theorized based on Oliver's (1992, p. 564) antecedents of de-institutionalisation, discussing the various factors the lead to "de-legitimisation of an established practice" from a material perspective. The issue regarding the characteristics of the learning cards (based on quantity and nature) resembled Oliver's (1992) functional pressure that affected practitioner's ability to implement a practice; this, in turn, impacted the legitimacy of the institution (Gilmore and Sillince, 2014) or in other words, the stability and maintenance of the institution. Besides this functional pressure that operated at the organisational level, there existed social pressure in the form of societal and state forces (Oliver, 1992) empirically highlighted in terms of participants' pressure to use the textbook, based on it socio-cultural significance as a teaching learning material and its role as a political emblem i.e. the political motive behind the free supply of textbooks in government schools in the context of Chennai and of Puducherry (discussed in section 5.5).

Overall, these findings support the existing literature that highlights different antecedents; one, social pressure in the form of state/societal forces, and two, a functional pressure in relation to the instrumentality of practice which together bring about institutional change (Kraatz and Moore, 2002; Leblebici et al., 1991; Maguire and Hardy, 2009). However, within this research, these antecedents were problematised through a tangible material perspective instead of ideational aspects such as structure,

and discourse. Besides these social and functional pressures in relation to material, other isomorphic pressure also had an impact in terms of continuity of ABL in the context of Chennai and Puducherry

As discussed in section 5.6.1.1 in the case of Chennai, based on a curriculum reform introduced in Tamil Nadu, the ABL practice was transformed into Simplified-ABL (SABL) through the modification of the material (i.e. textbooks and learning cards). However, in the case of Puducherry, since there was a change in the choice of the curriculum (they shifted from the state curriculum of Tamil Nadu to a central government curriculum) this led to a disruption of the ABL practice. The reforms in both sites were driven by aspects of coercive isomorphism through formal and informal pressures (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) as they aimed to achieve homogeneity in terms of quality of curriculum across schools[67] (discussed on pg.157 and 162). However, there were stronger informal pressures in the case of Puducherry that may have lead them not to adopt Tamil Nadu's curriculum reform.

In the case of Puducherry, the adoption of the central government curriculum (i.e. CBSE) instead of Tamil Nadu's state curriculum was attributed to the societal expectation to improve the standard of education offered in government schools through the choice of curriculum. As discussed in section 5.6.2.1, the CBSE curriculum was considered superior in comparison to Tamil Nadu's state board curriculum in terms of quality and medium of instruction. In addition to this informal societal pressure, the formal pressure to standardise and achieve homogeneity across other regions of Puducherry through adopting of CBSE curriculum was a key factor (discussed on pg. 162). Since Puducherry as a Union Territory depended on the Tamil Nadu state government for resources (i.e. the publishing and distribution of textbooks), they also had limited autonomy in terms of the choice of curriculum. As Puducherry's education department seemed to be persuaded to adopt the central government curriculum (formal) coupled with their limited autonomy in terms of resources and aiming to meet the cultural expectations of the society in relation to the choice of curriculum (informal), it reflected both formal and informal aspects of a coercive isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). These findings mirror Meyer et al's. (1981) example of how schools are required to conform to the state's mandated curriculum reform, a shift which can bring about institutional transformation. This is highlighted below.

6.2.2.2. Institutional change of ABL: transformation of learner-centred logic

In the case of Chennai, the modification of ABL into SABL was particularly explored from a material perspective to highlight how modifications in materiality had contributed to the maintenance of the practice. In the case of SABL, the learning cards and textbooks were revised in a manner such that they were complementary to each other i.e. the sections of the textbooks were used alongside their respective

[67] In the case of Tamil Nadu's curriculum reform, the homogeneity in terms of curriculum impacted government and private schools. Whereas in the case of Puducherry, moving to CBSE curriculum impacted homogeneity only for government schools but located in different geographical regions (Mahe and Yanam) of the Union Territory of Puducherry

learning cards to provide homework and were actively used by the teacher in the classroom. In terms of materiality, since textbooks and learning cards were linked together and considered as complementary teaching-learning material (Balamurugan and Usharani, 2016) these modifications improved the authenticity of the learning cards and also resolved various functional, political and social issues as discussed above. As discussed in section 5.6.1.1, the authenticity of learning cards was demonstrated through material mimicry with cards resembling the textbooks and through authentication by conformity to the social category of teaching-learning material (Jones et al., 2017; Lehman et al., 2019). Since the learning cards and the textbooks were used in various SABL practices such as formative assessment and teaching in the classroom, they both conformed to the category of teaching-learning material. As a result, authenticity was further strengthened through a connection between the two materials exhibited through different symbols or logos[68]. This validates Lehman's (2019, p.25) pattern that "authenticity as conformity incorporates elements of connection." When another curriculum reform was announced in 2018, the learning cards were not manufactured in relation to the modified textbooks and it resembled the disruptive institutional work of 'disconnection sanctions' (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). The absence of the learning cards, that had occupied a 'device-oriented' role in ABL, resulted in the decline of the ABL practice and paved the way for a new pedagogical practice. The empirical findings in the case of Puducherry is first discussed before I highlight the role of material in relation to institutional change.

With a government gearing towards the adoption of the CBSE curriculum in all government schools (Josh, 2014), there were attempts made to continue the ABL practice in relation to the CBSE curriculum. Although the ABL cards were prepared and authenticated by the officials (as discussed in section 5.6.2.2), the CBSE based learning cards were not used during training. The teachers were not instructed in how to work with the ABL cards since the trainers were using the textbooks as the main teaching-learning material instead of the learning cards and prescribed a different pedagogy for the CBSE curriculum (Sangathan, 2014). Therefore, although the CBSE based learning cards were present, the inability to develop the skills of effectively using these cards (competence) based on the preference to use textbooks as the main teaching-learning material (competence-material link) lead to the decline of ABL practice. Since educating the stakeholders is one of the key forms of institutional work required for the creation of the institution (ABL practice) (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006) the decision not to train practitioners with the necessary material led to the ABL practice being disrupted.

In terms of institutional logics, the curriculum reforms in the case of Chennai and Puducherry continued to draw on the learner-centred logic. However, the institution (ABL) underpinned by the institutional logic (learner-centred logic) was radically transformed particularly due to material changes. As

[68] Various logos such as classroom logo or book exercise logo depicted in the learning cards required the teachers and students to use the textbooks as part of the activity stated in the learning cards.

mentioned on pg. 160 and 164-165 in Chapter 5, there seemed to have been an interrelationship between the learning cards, textbooks and curriculum which was conceptualised based Shove's (2017) role of material: device-oriented, infrastructural and resource-based. Based on the role of the material, a curriculum reform (resource-based) resulted in the change in teaching-learning material (infrastructure and device-oriented) i.e. textbooks and learning cards. However, it was interesting to note that this resource-based change was brought about by institutional forces as stated in section 6.2.2.1 i.e. the curriculum reforms in the case of Chennai and Puducherry were underpinned by coercive isomorphic pressure to bring homogeneity in terms of the curriculum offered in schools. This caused a ripple effect that brought about changes in the device and infrastructural roles of material that in turn impacted practices. This suggests that the change in the material relations with respect to practices is situated within the institutional environment in which they are enacted.

The implications of this resource-based change were different with regards to each case. Initially, in the case of Chennai, based on the inter-relationship between the materials, the curriculum reform (resource-based) resulted in the modification of the textbook (infrastructural) and learning cards (device-oriented) in the SABL practice. Although textbooks were more actively used in SABL than ABL, they still occupied an infrastructural role with an exception to few sub-practices with SABL [69]. However, when the second curriculum reform happened in 2018, there was a switch between the infrastructural and device-oriented material i.e. textbooks took on the main device-oriented role and the learning cards[70] occupied a background infrastructural role. As this is evidence of Shove's (2017) proposition of material transiting between roles, this change in the role of the material led to the decline of the SABL practice since these learning cards, that were representative of the ABL based learner-centred logic, were no longer used as the main teaching-learning material. This transition of role of material also occurred in the case of Puducherry i.e. although the CBSE based learning cards had been developed, they adopted an infrastructural role and textbooks served as the main device-oriented role that was initiated at training; teachers were trained to developed competences to use the textbook as their main teaching-learning material instead of the learning cards. Both in the case of Chennai and Puducherry, based on curriculum change, textbooks that previously occupied infrastructural roles were brought to the forefront as devices and the learning cards were pushed to the background as infrastructural material. This is evidence of Shove's (2017) proposition that certain infrastructural arrangement (textbooks) will prevent the use of some devices (learning cards) and exclude certain practices (ABL). Table 6.2 below exhibits the different roles of material in relation to ABL within the two contexts of Chennai and Puducherry. The switch in roles of material (between infrastructural and device-based) can be observed

[69] For instance, in classroom logo, the textbook will occupy a device-oriented role as the teacher will engage in a teaching practice with the textbook as key teaching-learning material

[70] New learning cards were not manufactured for the new curriculum reform of 2018. The old SABL learning cards were used by teachers as additional teaching learning material as and when required

in relation to the change of ABL practices in the highlighted section. Figure 6.5. illustrates how the change in material (particularly device-oriented role) impacted the maintenance and disruption of ABL in both contexts.

Material perspective	**Practices in two sites**	
Roles of material	**Chennai**	**Puducherry**
Device-oriented: Learning cards **Infrastructural:** textbooks (rarely used), other ABL material- learning ladder, achievement chart, **Resource based:** the curriculum	ABL (2003-12)	ABL (2008-12)
Device-oriented: Learning cards **Infrastructural:** textbooks (actively used), other ABL material- learning ladder, achievement chart, **Resource based:** the curriculum	SABL (2013-2018)	Attempted to establish ABL based on CBSE curriculum but failed (2013)
Device-oriented: Textbooks **Infrastructural:** learning cards and other supplementary material **Resource-based:** the curriculum	New Pedagogy- ABL declined (2018 onwards)	New Pedagogy-ABL declined (2013 onwards)

Table 6.2: Role of material within different pedagogical practices

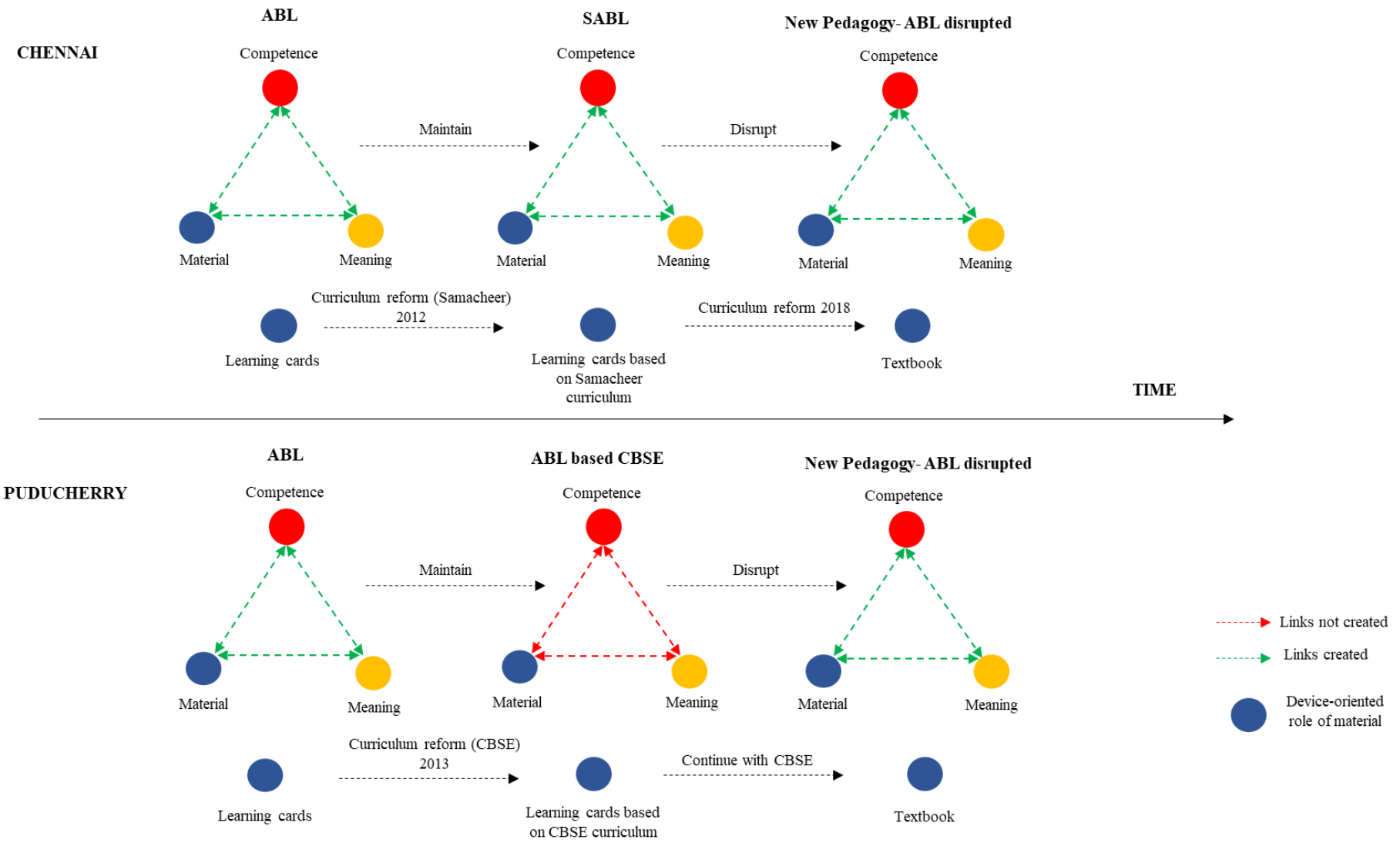

Figure 6.5: Impact of the material changes in relation to ABL

Therefore, the change in the role of the given material in relation to the expected practice impacts the enactment and continuity of that practice. The significance of these materials in relation maintenance and disruption of ABL will be discussed in the section below.

6.3. Contribution: Facets of institutional change

Based on the analysis of the empirical findings highlighted above, I present three main contributions in relation to different aspects of institutional change: institutional work as practice that illustrate 'how' change unfolds; the dimensions of agency and collective role of practitioners in relation to 'who' bring about change and the significance of material as a key element constitutes part of 'what' is required for change.

6.3.1. Unfolding of institutional change through practices

Section 6.1 identified the different day to day sub-practices of ABL (teacher's position, teaching style and assessment practice) and the supporting and enabling practice (training and monitoring) as forms of institutional work that resulted in the emergence of the ABL practice. This emergence of ABL was considered as the unfolding of institutional change which was conceptualised in terms of replacement of logics (from teacher-centred logic with learner-centred logic) and exhibited through forms of institutional work. Conceiving institutional change based on institutional logics, my research contributes to the gap of exploring how the meaning framework of institutions unfolds "on the ground" through practitioner's daily practices (Zilber, 2013, p.82), thereby theorizing change as ongoing and dynamic. Based on the dynamic nature of practices (Shove et al., 2012), the practice framework brings to light the constituents of the day to day practices (as seen through meaning, material and competence) of the teachers and the evolving links between these elements. As discussed in relation to each practice, the emergence of practice may not occur, as the links between the elements may not be made and or at times may be weakened due to the multiple interpretations of the individual practitioner that is highlighted through dimensions of agency (this will be further discussed below). Thereby, this research responds to the need for the provision of a more complex and dynamic perspective on institutional change (Micelotta et al., 2017) through a practice-based institutional work in contrast to a mechanistic (Delbridge and Edwards, 2007) or dramatic approach that has existed within the institutional literature (Battilana and Aunno, 2009). As this conceptualisation of institutional change compliments micro-level perspectives such as practice (Micelotta et al., 2017), it answers academics' calls to provide a micro-dynamic view of institutional change as it attempts to capture the earliest moments of institutional change (Smets et al., 2017) through the evolving links between the elements of practice. Overall this dynamic practice-based approach to institutional change not only contributes to the growing academic interest in exploring the 'coalface' of institutions (Barley, 2008; Powell and Rerup, 2017) but also has implications in terms of providing a comprehensive understanding of the change in practices within the various research streams such strategy (Jarzabkowski and Paul Spee, 2009; Whittington, 2006),

organisational learning and knowledge (Gherardi, 2000; Tsoukas, 2009) and organisational change (Jansson, 2013; 2014) in the field of management and organization studies.

6.3.2. Agency and the practitioner

While discussing the different forms of institutional work, my research highlighted the active role of the practitioners through different temporal dimensions of agency. Agency within this research is conceptualised to be temporal and relational; practitioners exercise a form of agency that is oriented to the past, present or future as they are embedded within a social context (Battilana and Aunno, 2009). Particularly, these dimensions of agency are adopted to interpret the multiple interpretations of the practitioner in relation to the practice i.e. agency exercised in relation to meaning element of the practice that is likely to impact the enactment of the practice. It is important to note that at a given moment, one dimension of agency is more predominant than the other two (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). For instance, iterative dimensions of agency based on past habits and routines were exhibited as practitioners indicated preference for the traditional method or had negative interpretation in relation to ABL and SABL practice. The presence of this past dimension of agency may have prevented or weakened the links between the elements and thereby caused resistance to emergence of ABL and SABL practices. This empirical finding is in support of existing studies that have attributed iterative dimension of agency to inertia or resistance to change (Dorado, 2005; Raviola and Norbäck, 2013). On the other hand, present-oriented practical evaluative agency and future-oriented projective agency were dominant in positive interpretations of ABL and SABL as participants aimed to get the job done while evaluating different options or as participants envision different trajectories of action in the future (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). These forms of agency may create or strengthen the links between elements and therefore may positively influence creation and maintenance of ABL as an institution, in accordance with the existing literature (Dorado, 2005; Smets and Jarzabkowski, 2013).

By drawing on Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) multi-dimensional and relational view of agency, my research highlights how practitioners have different ways of experiencing the world and accounting for their active role within institutional work. This active and collective role of the practitioner contributes not only to the much needed collective and relational view of agency within institutional theory and work (Battilana and Aunno, 2009; Delbridge and Edwards, 2007; Smets et al., 2017) but also attempts to account for a more explicit role of practitioner rather than implied role that currently exists within Shove's et al. (2012) practice framework. In terms of the practice framework, these temporal dimensions of agency underscore the agency of the practitioners that was implied in Shove's framework. Although the framework accounts for the role of the practitioner in terms of active integration of elements (Shove et al., 2012), these temporal dimensions suggest at certain moments and in certain situations, the links between the elements may not actually be made. For example, the presence of an iterative dimension of agency within the meaning element, suggests the practitioner's preference for past habits and routines (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998) and therefore weakens or fails to establish the clear link between the

other two elements i.e. competence and material. As a consequence, this can be said to weaken the emergence of practice. Overall, the dimensions of agency serve as a toolkit to understand variation in interpretations (amongst practitioners) that constitute the practice, its implication in terms of creating, maintaining and disrupting practices. By accounting for a more active and explicit role of the practitioner through these dimensions of agency, this study addresses one of the key criticisms of practice theory that side-lined the role of the individuals in practice (Shove et al., 2012) and supports/contributes to the dynamic nature of practices. However, the conclusions, implications and contributions based on these dimensions of agency are limited. Given the retrospective nature of this research, the inferences based on these temporal dimensions of agency are to be made with caution, as they may be representative of an interpretation of a meaning element valid only at that particular given instance. As this research highlights how temporality is used to understand interpretations of practitioners, it has implications in field of management and organization studies that explores how the temporality is crucial for understanding organisational behaviour and change over time (Dawson and Sykes, 2016; Hernes et al., 2013), role of temporality in strategy work (Vesa and Franck, 2013) and in organisational identity (Ravasi et al., 2019; Schultz and Hernes, 2013).

6.3.3. Materiality and institutional change

The empirical findings discussed above highlight the role of materiality within the creation, maintenance and disruption of the institution of ABL. In terms of creation of ABL, the practice framework underscored the role of material within various forms of institutional work: the significance of ABL classroom observations during training and educating stakeholders, learning cards as a key element that supported the sub-practices of ABL in practice work and embedding routines, and various material aspects of ABL were evaluated during monitoring (policing institutional work). As highlighted in the previous section, learning cards also contributed to the maintenance of ABL by managing institutional complexity that arose due to formative assessments and through attempts to establish their legitimacy and authenticity (through material legitimation strategies) as key teaching-learning material with ABL practice. As mentioned on pg.13 in Chapter 2, legitimacy is a central concept for institutional survival (Meyer and Rowan, 1977; Scott, 2001) and is crucial in explaining and justifying institutions (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). Within this empirical work, a material perspective is adopted towards the legitimacy of the institution of ABL. A material legitimation approach that corresponded to key forms of legitimacy (Suchman, 1995) is adopted in an attempt to fill the gap of an under-explored area of how materials contribute to institutional dynamics (De Vaujany et al., 2019) and foreground the role of materiality within institutions (Pinch, 2008). This research attempts to flesh out the attributes of two material legitimation strategies- *certification* and *material mimicry* by drawing on the various forms of authentication conceptualised by Lehman et al. (2019) in order to provide a stronger foundation for these strategies. Table 6.3 below highlights the material legitimation strategies and respective forms of authentication in relation to this research

Strategies of material legitimacy	Forms of authentication	Empirical evidence
Certification (demonstrates pragmatic legitimacy)	Authentication by conformity	PTA meetings and classroom observations organised to establish authenticity and legitimacy of learning cards as teaching-learning material
Material mimicry (demonstrates normative legitimacy)	Authentication by conformity and connection	The material modifications in relation to textbook and learning cards with SABL

Table 6.3: Material legitimation strategies and forms of authentication

As authentication has been identified as a form of institutional maintenance work (Colombero and Boxenbaum, 2019), using forms of authentication as an underpinning of material legitimacy strategies aims to support and strengthen the impact of such strategies on the maintenance of institutions. Based on this empirical work, material legitimation strategy can be considered as a form of institutional maintenance work.

The materiality in terms of learning cards played a crucial role in the disruption of ABL and the nuances of materiality were analysed by drawing on Shove's (2017) conceptualisation of different roles of material. The curriculum that occupied a resource-based role was influenced by various institutional forces that brought about not only changes in the device-oriented (learning cards) and infrastructural roles (textbooks) but also resulted in materials switching roles based on practices (learning cards that were once device-based in ABL practice later took on infrastructural role in new pedagogy). In relation to the empirical findings, the institutional forces that brought about the disruption of ABL were problematised through 'resource-based' role of material (curriculum) and the device-oriented role of material were the key material element in relation to practice and therefore significant in relation to institutional change. Overall, Shove's (2017) categories of roles of material enabled a foregrounding of the complexities of materiality in relation to disruption of ABL and therefore contribute to the significant yet under-theorised role of material within institutions (Jones et al., 2017; Lawrence et al., 2013; Smith, 2001; Thornton et al., 2012).

As a crucial element in the process of institutional change (based on institutional work), materials also contribute to defining the nature of institutional change (based on institutional logics). Based on the conceptualisation that materials are carriers of institutional logics (Jones et al., 2017), this research attempts to foreground the role of material in the shift in the institutional logics that brings about institutional change. This is highlighted through the three sub-practices of ABL in Chapter 4, within which there were material changes as exhibited in Table 6.4 below.

Sub-practices	Teacher centred logic (Traditional pedagogy)	Learner-centred logic (ABL pedagogy)
Teacher's position	Table and chair	Floor, mats and stools
Teaching style	Textbook, blackboard and flashcards	Learning cards and learning ladder
Assessment	Examination question papers and report cards	Test cards and achievement chart

Table 6.4: List of material in relation to sub-practices of traditional and ABL pedagogy

These materials played a crucial role in supporting these sub-practices that were significant in bringing about institutional logics shift from teacher-centred to learner-centred logic. Therefore, this empirical finding responds to calls to examine how institutional logics are changed or sustained through material means (De Vaujany et al., 2019). Besides these materials, the learning cards and textbooks were key teaching-learning material in theses sub-practices (as discussed in section 5.1and 5.2) and served as a representative of the ABL pedagogy based on learner-centred logic and the traditional pedagogy based on teacher-centred logic. It is important to note that the significance of material within my research is relational; the materials are to be understood and implicated in relation to practice (Jones et al., 2017). The materials are particularly underscored in relation to institutional logics during the maintenance and disruption of ABL. The learning cards played a significant role in managing institutional complexity problematised through formative assessment by combing logics through the material; using learning cards (learner-centred logic) to give homework (teacher-centred logic). This, therefore, responds to calls to illuminate the role of material within institutional logics (Jones et al., 2013), and not only addresses the gap in exploring how "materials can instantiate different logics" within an institutional perspective (Jarzabkowski et al., 2013, p.55) but also institutional logics are changed through material means (De Vaujany et al., 2019). Jones et al's (2017) proposition, that materials are important carriers and are the mechanism that sustains and transforms institutional logics over time, is supported by the empirical findings of the material legitimation strategies discussed above; the strategy aimed to strengthen the material aspect of the ABL or in other words the materiality of the learner-centred logic.

Similarly, the disruption of ABL is also highlighted through the change in the role of material i.e. from learning cards to textbooks. Hence, the empirical findings of this research respond to the need to account for role material in relation to shift in logic (Gawer and Phillips, 2013; Jones et al., 2013; Jones et al., 2017). Overall, this research supports the growing demand to account for the role of materiality, not only in creation (Katila et al., 2019; Raviola and Norbäck, 2013) and maintenance of institutional practice (Colombero and Boxenbaum, 2019; Jones and Massa, 2013; Lanzara and Patriotta, 2007) but also as an indicator that materiality is crucial in relation to the question of the disruption of exiting practices (Jones et al., 2017). By responding to the need to examine materials in order to understand change in institutional logics (De Vaujany et al., 2019; Gawer and Phillips, 2013), my research

contributes to the growing demand to explore the role of material in relation to institutional work and change (Greenwood et al., 2017; Hampel et al., 2017; Pinch, 2008). Besides institutional change, foregrounding the role of materials has implications in other areas of management and organization studies such as decision making (Cabantous et al., 2010) routines (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011; Feldman and Pentland, 2003) and more generally within organisational dynamics (Carlile et al., 2013).

6.4. Summary

In summary, this chapter analysed the various forms of institutional work as practices that contributed to creating and maintaining the institution of ABL. Thereafter the significance of the material in relation to maintenance of ABL through managing institutional complexity and material legitimation strategy was illustrated and disruption of ABL through a change in the role of materials was presented. The theoretical contributions of my empirical work were discussed through the different facets of institutional change: 'how' the practice-based institutional work approach contributed to a micro-dynamic approach to institutional change, highlighted the collective and relational role of agency and practitioner 'who' brought about change and stressed on how materials play a crucial role in the creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions, thereby constituting 'what' is required for unfolding of change.

Chapter 7 CONCLUSION

Based on my curiosity to understand change, the focus of my thesis was to explore how the ABL practice, an innovative pedagogical method in contrast to the traditional method, was implemented in the context of Chennai where it was sustained for a longer period in comparison to Puducherry. Rather than attributing this change exclusively to environmental factors or individual agency, my research aimed to understand how this institutional change unfolded at a grass-root level and focused on answering this overarching research question: '*How does practice-based institutional work contribute to an understanding of institutional change?'* With ABL and the traditional method being conceptualised as institutions, the institutional change based on the pedagogical practice was defined in terms of replacement of the teacher-centred logic with learner-centred logic that was achieved through the enactment of different practices theorized as forms of institutional work. Based on a case study methodology with a comparative lens, I identified and explored the different practices that contributed to the creating and maintaining the institution of ABL and foregrounded the role of materiality in relation to institutional change and particularly institutional disruption. The section below summarizes these findings and contribution of my research. Subsequent sections present the limitations of this research, theoretical reflections and the Chapter concludes with future research directions that have emerged from this empirical work.

7.1. Empirical findings and theoretical contributions

This research identified and illustrated the different forms of practice-based institutional work such as educating stakeholder, practice work, embedding routine, and policing that contributed towards creating and maintaining the institution of ABL, in the context of Chennai and of Puducherry. The constituents of these practices- meaning, material and competence and the links between these elements were foregrounded by adopting the three-element practice framework developed by Shove et al. (2012) in order to provide a micro perspective view of institutional change. The dynamic nature of practices was also exhibited through variations in the meaning elements of practice, that were analysed through dimensions of agency.

Based on the empirical findings, *educating stakeholders* through practices related to training, three sub-practices of ABL (teacher's position, teaching style and assessment practices), that constituted the *practice work,* were experienced in a similar manner in the sites of Chennai, and of Puducherry. In the context of both sites, practitioners (teachers) who initially experienced a sense of fear and doubt during ABL training owing to the radical nature of change in the methods, seemed to develop a sense of understanding through supportive training-related material, such as through video clips or ABL classroom observations

Further, practitioners gained more clarity as they began to perform key sub-practices of ABL, such as sitting on the floor with students and teaching them individually or in small groups, supported by relevant material such as stools, mats and the ABL learning material. In the assessment sub-practice of ABL, examinations (traditional method) were conducted along with test cards (ABL) because of the former's socio-cultural significance. A key difference between the sites was exhibited with regards to the *policing* work that constituted the monitoring practice in relation to maintaining ABL. This practice was weaker in the case of Puducherry since inspections were less frequent than in Chennai. Monitoring officials in Puducherry were also perceived not to favour ABL. As a result, monitoring processes exhibited lesser control in Puducherry that in turn weakened the maintenance of ABL, here. Therefore, over time, in both empirical sites, practice work that constituted the daily routine of practitioners supplemented and supported by training and monitoring practices, enabled the shift from the traditional method (teacher-centred logic) to ABL (learner-centred logic). This contributed to maintaining ABL, which became *embedded in the routine* of practitioners that was at least partly weakened due to the difficulties in the monitoring practices, specifically in the case of Puducherry. Overall, the different forms of institutional work contributed to creating and maintaining the institution of ABL. However, it is important to note that not all practitioners experienced and engaged in these practices similarly or consistently. There were variations in the meaning element of the practice, as analysed through the past-oriented iterative dimension of agency. While this dimension indicated resistance to change, present-oriented practical evaluative agency and future-oriented projective agency supported the change from traditional to the ABL method. This is likely to have impacted the links between the elements of practice, thereby underscoring the complex and dynamic nature of practices and of institutional change.

Having discussed how the forms of institutional work contributed towards creating and maintaining ABL, my research also highlighted the role of material in maintaining and disrupting ABL. In terms of maintenance, institutional complexity (i.e. situating of incompatible logics) was managed as learning cards were used to provide formative assessment, a practice associated with the traditional method, to address parents' concerns about the limited role of formative assessments in ABL. Besides, learning cards were further legitimised as authentic teaching-learning material by a certification strategy through PTA meetings and classroom observation sessions for parents. However, a change in materiality led to the disruption of ABL, occurring sooner in Puducherry. A state board curriculum reform (Samacheer syllabus) that had first been initiated in Chennai was not followed through in Puducherry, as the latter switched to a Central Board of Secondary Education curriculum (CBSE) due to institutional factors. As a result of the switch in the curriculum, ABL was restructured to become Simplified ABL (SABL) with the necessary material, leading to the continuity of ABL in Chennai. In Puducherry, however, training teachers for the CBSE curriculum warranted a different pedagogy instead of ABL and despite the development of CBSE learning cards for ABL, they were not implemented. Further, the decline of SABL as a result of a subsequent curriculum reform introduced in Chennai highlighted how the role of

material- learning cards, textbooks and curriculum were interlinked. This has been theorised in relation to Shove's (2017) conceptualisation of roles of material- device-oriented, infrastructural and resource-based influenced by the institutional environment in which they were situated. Overall, nuances of materiality in terms of legitimation strategies, and their role in practices, contributed to the maintenance and to the disruption of the ABL institution.

Overall, the empirical findings discussed above made three main contributions; Firstly, by adopting the three-element practice framework in exploring the elements that constitute institutional work, my research theorized the nature of institutional change as ongoing and dynamic, thus responded to institutional scholars' demands for a complex perspective of change (Micelotta et al., 2017). This dynamic and micro-perspective of change, therefore, attempted to open the 'black-box' of institutions (Lounsbury and Crumley, 2007) and contributed to a growing academic interest in exploring the 'coal-face' of institutions, and of institutional change (Powell and Rerup, 2017; Smets et al., 2017).

Secondly, the dimensions of agency not only served as an analytical tool to explain the variations in the meaning elements of practice but in turn have implications in the links between the elements being created, sustained or disrupted. Therefore, the agency dimensions attempted to capture the earliest moment of institutional change, an existing "conceptual blind-spot" in relation to change (Smets et al., 2017, p. 318), and these dimensions were drawn in reference to the creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions. Besides contributing to the dynamic nature of institutional change, the dimensions of agency also contributed to the active role of practitioners within practices, rather than as implied in the case of a practice framework (Shove et al., 2012) and to a collective and relational view of agency exhibited through the daily practices (of a practitioner) (Delbridge and Edwards, 2007). However, this contribution is conditional, given the retrospective nature of this research, and therefore inferences are to be drawn cautiously.

Finally, the role of materiality in relation to the maintenance and disruption of institutions responded to significant the need to account for material in relation to institutional work (Katila et al., 2019; Raviola and Norbäck, 2013), and to institutional change (Pinch, 2008). By exploring how materials help manage institutional complexity, my thesis attempted to fill the gap of the under-explored area of the role of materials in relation to institutional logics (Jarzabkowski et al., 2013; Jones et al., 2013). With material legitimation strategies based on forms of authentication contributing to the maintenance of institutions, this research extended the work on legitimation and authenticity as forms of institutional maintenance work (Colombero and Boxenbaum, 2019). In relation to disruption, by foregrounding and theorizing the different roles of material through the conceptualisation of Shove's (2017) role of material, my research contributed to an understanding of the under-theorized yet significant role of materials within institutions/ institutional transformation (Hampel et al., 2017; Jones et al., 2017). Overall, this research accounted for the role of material in relation to institutional change.

7.2. Limitations

This research has its limitations, as is the case with all research. I adopted a case study methodology, with subsequent choices made in relation to the site of study, sample details and analysis. My study focused on the implementation of ABL in the context of two sites: Chennai and Puducherry. An additional third site for study, e.g. Karaikal, a city within the Union Territory of Puducherry may have further corroborated some of the empirical findings of my research.

In the case of my theoretical approach, although my research explored in-depth the constituents of practices, it is limited in exploring how sub-practices of ABL (sitting on the floor, teaching style, assessment practices) are linked in 'complexes' of ABL practice and further linked to training and monitoring practices. As my research opened the black box of the 'complexes' of ABL practice, these findings could have benefited from additional observational data gathered in classroom settings. My research acknowledged limitations of Shove's framework which could more carefully define the meaning and competence elements but focused on its strength as an analytical tool to methodically present and analyse the constituent aspects of institutional work, as practice, and in turn commented on how material elements contributed to the creation, maintenance and disruption of institutions.

7.3. Theoretical reflections

This section explores how some of the limitations of this research can be addressed in future by drawing on alternative theoretical concepts and frameworks. I discuss and draw on different empirical work to indicate how future research can be developed along the following lines: the links between the practices and its relation to institutions, how practices can change and its implication on the process of institutional change and the role of agency and practitioners. The section concludes with specific contributions to institutional theory literature.

In relation to the links between practices, it can be explored by drawing on Kemmis' et al. (2014, 2019) conceptualisation of practice, practice architecture and ecologies of practices. Kemmis et al (2019, p.24) refer to practices as forms of human action that constitute the doings (activities), sayings (ideas) and relatings (relationships of individuals involved in practices) that all "hang together in the project of the practice (the purposes that motivate the practice)". Kemmis and his co-authors go onto to explore how practices 'hang together' through 'practice architectures' i.e. arrangements or conditions that make practice possible. Practice architectures enable and constrain the sayings, doings and relating aspects of a practice through three specific dimensions: cultural-discursive arrangements (e.g. language, discourse), material-economic arrangements (e.g. objects, spatial arrangements) and socio-political arrangements (e.g. the relationship between people) in intersubjective spaces. As practices do not exist in isolation and are interrelated, the practice and practice architectures of one practice may change the form or content of another practice and that practice can travel from site to site (Kemmis et al., 2014).

This link between practices can be further theorised by the concept of 'ecologies of practices' which are the relationships in which one practice is interdependent with another practice (ibid). For example, in relation to my research, the practice related to training and practice architecture of training constitutes of teachers' interpretations of ABL (saying) communicated through language (cultural-discursive arrangements), teachers learning to do different aspects of the ABL practice (doing) through ABL training material (material-economic arrangement) and the relationship between the trainer and the teachers and amongst teachers as they are trained for the ABL practice (relating) through rules and practical agreements between them (socio-political arrangements). This training practice and its practice architecture may impact the sub-practices of ABL that teachers are required to implement in the classroom. For instance, teachers stated that having ABL material such as learning cards (material-economic arrangements) made it easier for them to implement the ABL practice in the classroom. Besides materiality being a key element to explore the change within practices (as highlighted in this research), a material lens may also be adopted to examine how practices are interconnected. Exploring the links between practices will also help strengthen the conceptualisation of institutions as nexus of practices. This may be developed by drawing on Schatzki's (2019) ongoing work of how a practice plenum (large and complex practice bundles and arrangements) indicates the presence of various institutional logics of variable, spatial and temporal form that hang together and evolve and thereby attempting to form an alliance between practice and institutions.

On an account of how practices changes, based on Shove's et al. (2012) framework, my research highlighted how practices may be created, maintained or disrupted either through the links between the elements of practice (meaning, material and competence) that are made, sustained or broken or through a change in the elements which impacts the links between them and therefore brings about the emergence and transformation of practice. These practices conceptualised as forms of institutional work were adopted to highlight the micro-dynamic nature of institutional change. However, by going beyond the links *within* the practice and its constituents, my research can be advanced by drawing on recent empirical work (discussed below) that have developed alternative frameworks on how practice can evolve and change.

Practices can change based on how they are linked or interlock with each other. Spurling et al. (2013) highlight how infrastructure (that influence *where* practices take place) and institutions (that influence *when* practices take place) play a crucial role in how practices interlock. In addition, Spurling and her co-authors draw on Shove's et al. (2012) work on connections between practice and empirically show how interventions (or practice change) may be achieved by focusing on the sequence of practice (practice occurring one after the other) or synchronisation of practice (practices happening at the same time). In response to how practice theory can provide valuable insights for policy initiatives, Watson et al. (2020) discuss the development of the change points approach that reframes policy processes by engaging with complexities of everyday activities, changing both the framing of problems and practical

solutions for change. The approach is based on the concept of change points that are moments of activities in daily routines where alternative actions can impact policy issues. These change points are interconnected across space and time such that moments of activity are related to wider activities and arrangements. Watson's et al. (2020) approach has five different stages (problem scoping, change points, diversity, influence mapping and reframing) to bring about change initiatives which are empirically explored through the case study of food wastage reduction. Alternatively, practice change can also be explored by drawing on Phipps and Ozanne's (2017) empirical work on how individuals readjust to change in routines (or practices) through establishing their ontological security (a sense of order and predictability in their routines). The authors develop a framework of how five different ontological states were co-constituted through the interplay of practical understanding (shared, tacit understanding what to do) and discursive understanding (articulable, shared knowledge about actions) of individuals and these understandings are situated within materiality and constitutive rules of the practice. In relation to my research, future work can explore how the change in links between practice in terms of sequences (teacher training followed by ABL implementation in the classroom) or synchronisation (various ABL related practices happening together in a classroom) bring about ABL transformation or change in practice can be explored by adopting the change points approach. Alternatively, the role of ontological security (for instance teachers' sense of security or insecurity) in adopting the ABL pedagogical practice can be explored.

With regards to agency, Shove's et al. (2012) three-element practice framework takes on an implied view of agency with practitioners being carriers of practice and their agency implied in their performance of the practice. In response to this, my research attempted to highlight the explicit role of agency through Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) temporal dimension of agency which was adopted to highlight variation in the meaning element of the practice (or interpretations in relation to the practice) that affects the links between the elements and thereby brings about practice transformation. Besides these dimensions of agency adapted from the sociological literature, future research can account for a more active role of the practitioner and their agency by drawing on some empirical studies from the practice theory literature which are mentioned below.

Molander and Hartman (2018) theorize the link between emotions and practice by exploring how emotions are organized within practice and how practices are formed by emotions. By drawing on Schatzki's (2002) concept of teleoaffective structures (sets of ends, projects and affectivities), Molander and Hartman (2018, p. 376) illustrate how emotions organize practice and vice versa through "three teleoaffective structures- anticipating, actualizing and assessing" and how these structures serve as a link between what individual feels and the things they do. Besides the role of emotions within practices, Keller and Halkier (2014) explore how media discourse impacts the individual's practice performance in relation to contested consumptions. The authors conceptualise how practitioners position themselves and others through their practice performance with media discourse; practitioners interact with the

discourse (a symbolic resource) that influence practice maintenance or change or forms of adapting and negotiating and the discourse can take on a resistant position against social control or appropriate position that provide space for action. In addition to the role of emotions and discourse, accounting for power within practices is also an alternative approach to account for the practitioner's agency within the practice. Watson (2016) summarizes the way power (the capacity to act which is relational and socially constituted with an effect) is accounted for in practice theory by discussing: First, Foucault's (1982) work on power relations (the socio-formative power one individual has over another), governing (means and actions that shape other individual's conduct) and apparatus of governing such as administration, institution and physical; Second, Latour's (1987) Actor-Network Theory (ANT) account of power which Watson (2016, p. 7) summarises as "an effect of composition and alignment of heterogenous relations", how practitioners' power is based on its location in the social network and drawing on aspects of translation. The role of practitioners may also be developed by drawing on aspects of Maciel and Wallendorf's (2017) model of cultural competence which identifies and illustrates how practitioners attain the goal of cultural competence (mastery of rules, understandings and teleoaffectivities that constitute a practice) by combining two sources: one, institutionally provided source of meanings, objects and doings and two, knowledge and values from the practitioner's habitus. Combing these resources leads to a strategy of action that constitutes a group of dispersed practices through which practitioner combine aspects of integrative practices in order to develop mastery or cultural competence. Future work in relation to my research may draw on these concepts or framework to account for the role of practitioner and their agency: For instance, teleoaffective structures can account for the teacher's emotions as they train and learn a new pedagogical practice or how media discourse impacted teacher's performance of ABL (or resistance to perform) within classrooms. Besides the role of emotions and media discourse, future work can examine the power relations between ABL teachers and inspecting officers that surfaced during the monitoring practices, aspects of teacher's resistance and its impact on ABL implementation in the classroom or can draw on the cultural competence model to explore how ABL teachers attained mastery over the ABL practice they implemented in the classroom.

In relation to contributions to the institutional theory literature, my study responds to academic calls for a more complex and dynamic perspective of institutional change (Micelotta et al., 2017). My research identifies how different practices conceived as forms of institutional work describe the unfolding of institutional change. Future work can explore how this practice-based approach to institutional change helps understand (in addition to describing) the process of institutional change. For instance, based on Shove's et al. (2012) three-element framework, future work can explore the different processes through which elements of the practice change (*meaning* changes and evolves through the process of de and re-classification*, competence* transforms through abstraction and reversal and *material* through access and transportation) are situated within the process of institutional change. By explaining the underlying

mechanism of the process of institutional change, this practice-based approach to institutional change may contribute to existing models of institutional change developed by Smet, Morris and Greenwood (2012) and Greenwood et al. (2002). For example, the process of de-classification and re-classification of meaning can help better understand the process of theorisation (specifying failures and justifying abstract solutions) that unfolds within Greenwood's et al. (2002) stages of institutional change. Additional contributions to institutional theory literature can be made by distinguishing between forms of institutional work aimed at changing the institution and institutional work engaged in adopting the new institution. For example, my research acknowledged practice work as a form of institutional work as practitioners put effort and intentionality (exhibited through dimensions of agency) in creating and maintaining the institution of ABL by performing the three sub-practices of ABL. This practice work can be developed further by exploring how the practitioners create and promote new practices by creating a powerful narrative about the practice, theorizing, and promoting new practices (Zietsma and Lawrence, 2002). These forms of practice work are different in comparison to educating stakeholders and policing forms of institutional work carried out by different individuals. The distinction between forms of institutional work can be explored through Hallett and Ventresca (2006) concept of "inhabited institution" that perceives institutions to be populated by people and the way they interact and do things. Based on symbolic interactionism, the authors discuss how the inhabited institution approach is focused on local and extra-local embeddedness, local and extra-local meaning and a skeptical, inquiring attitude. This approach, for instance, can be used to differentiate between individuals who are located in organisations who perform institutional work to bring about pedagogical changes (local embedded individuals- head teaches and trainers) and those individuals who implement those changes on the ground (extra-local embedded individuals- teachers).

7.4. Future research directions

The last section of this Chapter and Thesis discusses possible future research along two main themes: the applicability of a practice framework to other forms of 'work' and exploring materiality in relation to institutional complexity and legitimation.

In terms of future research directions, the first theme focuses on how the practice framework can serve as a theoretical lens to explore other forms of 'work' in relation to institutional change. Forms of work identified by Phillips and Lawrence (2012) such as values work and identity work, that are currently gaining interest amongst institutional scholars. By adopting a practice perspective to these forms of work, it will be possible to foreground links between elements that contribute to the emergence of the work (as practice) and its subsequent impact on institutional change. For instance, institutional scholars who have already conceptualised values work (the activities of actors within which the values of an organisation are practiced) to bring about institutional change (Gehman et al., 2013; Vaccaro and Palazzo, 2015; Wright et al., 2017) may benefit from adopting a more active, practice perspective. This

would foreground the aspects of material and competence that contribute to values which are practised and changed within an organisation leading to institutional change. Similarly, studies that have identified the role of identity work, that involves individuals being engaged in the formation and reconstruction of their self-identity, in relation to institutional work and change (Gill, 2015; Leung et al., 2014; Lok, 2010) could potentially gain from similar practice theorisation. For example, as indicated in the empirical findings of my research, teachers within the traditional method were perceived to have developed an identity in relation to the tables and chairs they used in the classrooms, and it would be interesting to further investigate how aspects of materiality contribute to their individual identity, and identity work. Additionally, these forms of identity and values work, that have already been identified as forms of institutional work, can be further explored in relation to institutional logics and complexity. For instance, when faced with contradictory how this conflict seems to impact on the values and/or identity of the individual is another area worth exploring.

The second theme is based around the significance of materiality in relation to institutional complexity, and the aspects of legitimation and authentication. As the empirical findings of this research have indicated how the material can contribute to managing institutional complexity in relation to formative assessment, it opens an avenue for future research into how aspects of materiality impact institutional complexity. Given growing acknowledgement of the significance of material in relation to institutional logics and change (De Vaujany et al., 2019; Jones et al., 2017), it will be interesting to examine how roles of material, or specific characteristics of materials, can either problematize or resolve institutional complexity. Besides this role in relation to institutional complexity, the legitimation and authentication of materiality in relation to institutional transformation is also a fruitful avenue that may be explored. Future research could attempt to theorize the relationship between legitimation strategies and forms of authentication in relation to institutional change. Going beyond the role of material in relation to practice, delving deeper into specific characteristics and qualities of materials as presented in the empirical work of Colombero and Boxenbaum (2019) and Jones and Massa (2013), future research could investigate the impact of the qualities of various materials in relation to forms of institutional work and change.

The practice perspective on institutional work can have possible real-world implications in various professional settings. As practice-oriented approaches have already gained momentum in informing and assisting policy formulation and evaluation (Evans et al., 2012; Pantzar and Shove, 2010; Shove et al., 2012), these approaches will stand to benefit by drawing on concepts of institutional work, and isomorphic elements (that bring about organisational similarity) within neo-institutional theory. Practice theorists considering these institutional arrangements might be better equipped to inform change in policy and practice. On the other hand, institutional scholars drawing on a practice-based institutional work can attempt to narrow the 'theory-practice gap' and this perspective can serve as an analytical lens for exploring change in key societal activities such as such the provision of healthcare (Kitchener and

Mertz, 2012), crime and legal issues (Vadera and Aguilera, 2015) and climate change (Hoffman and Jennings, 2015). As change and innovation are aspects that almost all sectors grapple with, this practical practice-based approach can foreground the elements required to effectively bring innovation and change into practices and procedures, shed light on the socio-cultural shared understandings in relation to practices, and attempt to take on and visualize changes through a comprehensive lens. Such an approach may assist in enabling institutional theory research to have a greater impact outside the academic world, thereby attempting to address a concern amongst institutional scholars (Greenwood and Hinings, 2002; Hampel et al., 2017).

To conclude, my thesis highlighted how the unfolding of institutional change as a result of the replacement of logic occurred through various of forms of institutional work that contributed to creating, maintaining and disrupting the institution of ABL, within the context of Chennai, and of Puducherry. It also emphasised the role of materiality in relation to maintaining and disrupting ABL, thereby foregrounding the role of materiality in institutional transformation. These empirical findings have made significant theoretical contributions in relation to exploring the coalface of institutions: through a practice-based approach to institutional work and change, by highlighting the agency of practitioners through temporal dimensions of agency, and by contributing to the under-explored area of the role of material in relation to institutional work and change. By drawing on a practice perspective, overall my research highlighted the becoming and dynamic nature of institutions, re-iterated how change is constant and thereby contributed to the ability of institutional theory to explore real-life dynamic changes within the organization and management studies.

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Appendix

Appendix 1A: Interview Schedule: Chennai

Introduction:

Before the start of the interview, I briefly introduce myself and provide an overview of the research project. Specifically, I highlight the purpose of the interview is understand their experience and perceptions of ABL. I give them the statement of informed consent form and re-iterate the following

- Their participant in this study is on voluntary basis and they are free to withdraw anytime during the interview
- Any research findings that is presented or published will not reveal their identity
- They are free to speak in Tamil or English or switch between both as per their convenience.

Interview questions:

1. What is your name and current position in this organisation?
2. In your opinion, what led to the adoption of ABL methodology in schools in Chennai?
3. Please describe the nature of change of practice from the traditional method to ABL
4. What was your experience in being a part of the implementation process of ABL?
    a. What was role during the implementation of ABL?
    b. Please elaborate on any resistance you experienced during this change
    c. What was parents' opinion of ABL? How did they react to the change?
5. How did ABL continue to exist in Chennai and throughout Tamil Nadu until now? Why do you think this was the case?
6. Are you aware that ABL is likely to be discontinued?
    a. If you are aware, have you attended training?
    b. What is your opinion of it?
7. What is your final opinion of ABL as a teaching learning practice?

Key elements to be covered through interview questions:

- impact of training,
- role of different resources/ materials such as textbooks and learning cards, impact of curriculum reform

Prompts: Can you please tell me more about that

Appendix 1B: Interview Schedule: Puducherry

Introduction:

Before the start of the interview, I briefly introduce myself and provide an overview of the research project. Specifically, I highlight the purpose of the interview is understand their experience and perceptions of ABL. I give them the statement of informed consent form and re-iterate the following

- Their participant in this study is on voluntary basis and they are free to withdraw anytime during the interview
- Any research findings that is presented or published will not reveal their identity
- They are free to speak in Tamil or English or switch between both as per their convenience.

Interview questions:

1. What is your name and current position in this organisation?
2. In your opinion, what led to the adoption of ABL methodology in schools in Puducherry?
    a. How did Tamil Nadu's adoption of ABL impact Puducherry?
3. Please describe the nature of change of practice from the traditional method to ABL
4. What was your experience in being a part of the implementation process of ABL?
    a. What was role during the implementation of ABL?
    b. Please elaborate on any resistance you experienced during this change
    c. What was parents' opinion of ABL? How did they react to the change?
5. Why was ABL discontinued in the schools in Puducherry?
6. What is your final opinion of ABL as a teaching learning practice?

Key elements to be covered through interview questions:

- impact of training,
- role of different resources/ materials such as textbooks and learning cards,
- Role of CBSE curriculum

Prompts: Can you please tell me more about that

Appendix 2: Nature of documentary evidence

Nature of documents	Example of documents	Purpose	Audience
Online newspaper articles	Online articles from English Newspapers	Discuss different aspects of ABL; timeline of implementation, potential issues and concerns, introduction of different reforms	Diverse audience; available to all stakeholders
Policy documents	State government policy documents; SSA notes and documents	Highlights the underpinnings of Learner Centred Education (LCE) Key aspects of ABL as an innovative pedagogical practice	Diverse audience; available to all stakeholders
Government Orders	ABL implementation order in Tamil Nadu	Emphasizes the regulatory aspects of ABL	Specific stakeholders such as government officials, headmasters, teachers etc
Training manuals	Teacher training manual for ABL and SABL	Assist teachers in developing the necessary skills to implement ABL	Specific audience: teachers and their trainers

Appendix 3A: Permission letter to conduct research: Chennai

From

Educational officer ,
Greater Chennai Corporation,
Ripon Building,
Chennai – 600 003.

To

AnishaShanmugam,
Postgraduate Research student,
School of Economics,
Finance and Management,
University of Bristol, UK.

E.D.C.No. A3 / 1703 /2018 Date : 13 /02/2018

Sir,

Sub:	Greater Chennai Corporation – Education Department – Schools of Economics, Finance and Management –Permission granted to conduct research on Activity Based Learning (ABL) methodology, a pedagogical approach in all Chennai Schools – for the academic year of 2017-2018 – Orders Issued– Regarding.
Ref:	Letter from Anisha Shanmugam, Postgraduate Research student, School of Economics, Finance and Management, University of Bristol, UK, dated 13.02.2018

****

With references to the above as requested it is here by permitted Miss.Anisha Shanmugam to conduct research in Chennai School about focused on Activity Based Learning (ABL) methodology, a pedagogical approach with the condition that the research data collected in Chennai School should not be published in media and other private organisation without our permission.

The research should be conducted in the school after discussing with the headmaster/headmistress for the suitable time without disturbing regular school activities.

[redacted]

Copy to:

1. ALL AEO's
2. All HM's [redacted]

Appendix 3B: Permission letter to conduct research: Puducherry

RIGHT TO EDUCATION
SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN
EDUCATION FOR ALL

GOVERNMENT OF PUDUCHERRY
DIRECTORATE OF SCHOOL EDUCATION
SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

* * *

No. 872/ SSA/ Quality/ 2018/07 / 49 , Dt. 09.04.2018

MEMORANDUM

Sub: DSE - SSA - Research Project on implementation and decline of Activity Based Learning (ABL) in Puducherry Schools - Permission - Accorded - Reg.

* - * - * - *

Permission is hereby accorded to Ms. Anisha Shanmugam, Post Graduate Student, School of Economics, Finance & Management, University of Bristol, UK to carry out her research in the implementation and decline of Activity Based Learning (ABL) method of teaching in Government Schools of Puducherry.

In this regard, she is granted permission to interview the officials who were involved in ABL method, mentioned in the annexure - I. In addition to that, necessary permission is also granted to Ms. Anisha Shanmugam to visit and collect needy information for her research work in 15 Schools in Pondicherry and 10 Schools in Karaikal regions. A report of the visit is to be furnished to the undersigned for onward submission of the same to the Director of School Education, Puducherry.

// BY ORDER //

[redacted]

(MOHINDER PAL)
STATE PROJECT DIRECTOR

To
Ms. Anisha Shanmugam,
Post Graduate Student,
School of Economics, Finance & Management,
University of Bristol, UK

SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN UT OF PONDICHERRY MISSION AUTHORITY PUDUCHERRY

Copy to :

1. The Deputy Director (E.E.), DSE, Puducherry.
2. The Deputy Inspector of Schools, Zone – I / II / III / IV / V Puducherry / Karaikal.

} with instruction to permit the Individual to carry out research

Copy Submitted to :
1. The Director, Directorate of School Education, Puducherry.

Appendix 4: List of Participants

Chennai	
Pseudonym	**Role at time of the interview**
Bhuvana	Teacher trainer
Padma	Teacher
Uma	Teacher
Vaishnavi	Teacher
Indra	Teacher
Preethi	Teacher
Chitra	Teacher
Devi	Teacher
Sanjana	Teacher
Shruthi	Teacher
Saraswathi	Teacher
Lakshmi	Teacher
Pooja	Teacher
Mahalakshmi	Teacher
Jyothi	Head-teacher
Bhavani	Teacher
Varsha	Teacher
Selvi	Teacher
Jayashree	Head-teacher
Murali	Teacher trainer
Malani	Teacher
Khushbhu	Teacher
Madhavi	Head-teacher
Ananya	Head-teacher
Madhu	Head-teacher
Anitha	Official
Kavitha	Teacher
Radhika	Teacher
Padmini	Teacher
Arjun	Official

Puducherry	
Pseudonym	**Role at time of the interview**
Jaya	Teacher
Priya	Teacher trainer
Rani	Teacher
Viji	Teacher
Raji	Teacher
Roopa	Teacher
Archana	Teacher trainer
Hari	Official (retired)
Harish	Official
Govind	Teacher
Anjana	Teacher
Keerthi	Teacher
Ram	Official
Shyam	Official
Surya	Head-teacher
Karthik	Official
Vijay	Official
Swetha	Teacher

Appendix 5A: Statement of informed consent: Chennai

Statement of Informed Consent

Dear Participant,

Thank you for willing to be a part of my study. Before we begin, I request you to read this statement in order to ensure you are well informed about the details of the study and your rights as a participant.

Details of the study:

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) programme was implemented by the Government of India to achieve universalisation of elementary education over the past decade. In relation to improving the quality of primary education, the Tamil Nadu government implemented an innovative student-based learning approach known as Activity Based Learning (ABL).

The purpose of this research project is to explore the implementation and continuity of ABL in Tamil Nadu with particular reference to Chennai. I aim to gather your opinion on key factors/events that led to government primary schools adopting ABL. Such an innovative technique that was student friendly and activity based was rather different to (then) existing techniques based on textbooks and rote learning. Thereby, my second purpose is to understand how various element contribute/constrain the continuity of ABL in Chennai. The interview questions will revolve around your perceptions of these various facilitators and inhibitors with regard to implementation and continuity of ABL. The expected length of the interview will be 45 mins-60 mins.

I particularly focus on individuals from schools located across Chennai. I aim to talk to teachers, principals, Block Resource Teacher Educators (BRTE), officials from the Block Resource Centres (BRC) and higher officials in the SSA department who are referred to as stakeholders.

You are one among the mentioned stakeholders and your perceptions will be instrumental in shaping this research project. Please consider this an opportunity to voice your opinions regarding ABL, since your contribution is of prime importance to the teaching-learning community of ABL. Your views will help me understand elements that supported/ resisted ABL as a pedagogical change. This will assist in guiding and shaping the implementation of other innovative pedagogical techniques in Tamil Nadu and other states in India. Details of handling the information you give me is described in the next section.

Rights and confidentiality concerns of the participants:

Participation in this study is voluntary and you have the right to WITHDRAW at any point of time during the study.

Data gathered through interviews will be audio recorded and stored in a password-protected file that will be accessed only by me. All your details such as your name, designation and details of your institution will be anonymised during analysis. Any reports submitted to the higher authorities (if required) will ensure your anonymity and confidentiality is maintained. Dissemination of this research data in the forms of research paper (if any) will ensure all details are anonymised and pseudonyms will be used for participants and their institution. It is my duty to ensure that the information you share with me will not bring you or your institution any harm.

If you have any concerns or queries regarding this project, please feel free to contact me. You can also contact my supervisors if need be. If and when you have understood the above information and have agreed to be a part of this study, kindly fill your details along with your signature in the section below.

Informed Consent:

I have read and understood the details of this study and my rights as a participant. I'm willing to be a part of this study.

Name: Signature:

I give consent to be audio recorded.

Name: Signature:

Date:

Thank you once again!

Regards,

Anisha Shanmugam

Postgraduate Research Student

University of Bristol, UK

Email: as12722@bristol.ac.uk

Name of Supervisors:

Dr. Humphrey Bourne

Email: Humphrey.bourne@bristol.ac.uk

Dr. Deborah Wilson

Email: D.wilson@bristol.ac.uk

Appendix 5B: Statement of informed consent: Puducherry

Statement of Informed Consent

Dear Participant,

Thank you for willing to be a part of my study. Before we begin, I request you to read this statement in order to ensure you are well informed about the details of the study and your rights as a participant.

Details of the study:

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) programme was implemented by the Government of India to achieve universalisation of elementary education over the past decade. In relation to improving the quality of primary education, the Tamil Nadu government implemented an innovative student based learning approach known as Activity Based Learning (ABL).

The purpose of this research project is to explore the implementation and continuity/discontinuity of ABL in Tamil Nadu with particular reference to Pondicherry. I aim to gather your opinion on key facilitators that helped implement and scale up ABL. Although ABL was implemented in Pondicherry in 2009, it declined by 2012. Thereby, my second purpose is to understand the elements that contributed to the decline of ABL in Pondicherry and explore the key events that lead its discontinuity. The interview questions will revolve around your perceptions of these various facilitators and inhibitors/key events with regard to implementation and continuity/discontinuity of ABL. The expected length of the interview will be 45 mins-60 mins.

I particularly focus on individuals from schools located across Pondicherry. I aim to talk to teachers, principals, Block Resource Teacher Educators (BRTE), officials from the Block Resource Centres (BRC) and higher officials in the SSA department who are referred to as stakeholders.

You are one among the mentioned stakeholders and your perceptions will be instrumental in shaping this research project. Please consider this an opportunity to voice your opinions regarding ABL, since your contribution is of prime importance to the teaching-learning community. Your views will help me understand elements that supported/ resisted ABL as a pedagogical change. This will assist in guiding and shaping the implementation of other innovative pedagogical techniques in Tamil Nadu and other states in India.

Details of handling the information you give me is described in the next section.

Rights and confidentiality concerns of the participants:

Participation in this study is voluntary and you have the right to WITHDRAW at any point of time during the study.

Data gathered through interviews will be audio recorded and stored in a password-protected file that will be accessed only by me. All your details such as your name, designation and details of your institution will be anonymised during analysis. Any reports submitted to the higher authorities (if required) will ensure your anonymity and confidentiality is maintained. Dissemination of this research data in the forms of research paper (if any) will ensure all details are anonymised and pseudonyms will be used for participants and their institution. It is my duty to ensure that the information you share with me will not bring you or your institution any harm.

If you have any concerns or queries regarding this project, please feel free to contact me. You can also contact my supervisors if need be. If and when you have understood the above information and have agreed to be a part of this study, kindly fill your details along with your signature in the section below.

Informed Consent:

I have read and understood the details of this study and my rights as a participant. I'm willing to be a part of this study.

Name: Signature:

I give consent to be audio recorded.

Name: Signature:

Date:

Thank you once again!

Regards,

Anisha Shanmugam

Postgraduate Research Student

University of Bristol, UK

Email: as12722@bristol.ac.uk

Name of Supervisors:

Dr. Humphrey Bourne

Email: Humphrey.bourne@bristol.ac.uk

Dr. Deborah Wilson

Email: D.wilson@bristol.ac.uk

Appendix 6: Confidentiality Agreement

NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT (the "Agreement") is entered into on this 24th April 2018 by and between Anisha Shanmugam located at School of EFM, University of Bristol, UK (the" Disclosing Party"), and HONEY TRANSLATIONS with an address at No 23 "Raahat Plaza" Basement 172 Arcot road Vadapalani, (the "Receiving Party").

The Receiving Party hereto desires to participate in discussions regarding Translation and Transcription of interview for research purposes (the "Transaction"). During these discussions, Disclosing Party may share certain proprietary information with the Receiving Party. Therefore, in consideration of the mutual promises and covenants contained in this Agreement, and other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged, the parties hereto agree as follows:

1. Definition of Confidential Information.

(a) For purposes of this Agreement, "Confidential Information" means any data or information that is proprietary to the Disclosing Party and not generally known to the public, whether in tangible or intangible form, in whatever medium provided, whether unmodified or modified by Receiving Party or its Representatives (as defined herein), whenever and however disclosed, including, but not limited to: (i) any concepts, reports, data, know-how, works-in-progress, designs, development tools, specifications, computer software, source code, object code, flow charts, databases, inventions, information and trade secrets; (ii) any other information that should reasonably be recognized as confidential information of the Disclosing Party; and (iii) any information generated by the Receiving Party or by its Representatives that contains, reflects, or is derived from any of the foregoing. Confidential Information need not be novel, unique, patentable, copyrightable or constitute a trade secret in order to be designated Confidential Information. The Receiving Party acknowledges that the Confidential Information is proprietary to the Disclosing Party, has been developed and obtained through great efforts by the Disclosing Party and that Disclosing Party regards all of its Confidential Information as trade secrets.

(b) Notwithstanding anything in the foregoing to the contrary, Confidential Information shall not include information which: a) was lawfully possessed, as evidenced by the Receiving Party's records, by the Receiving Party prior to receiving the Confidential Information from the Disclosing Party; (b) becomes rightfully known by the Receiving Party from a third-party source not under an obligation to Disclosing Party to maintain confidentiality; (c) is generally known by the public through no fault of or failure to act by the Receiving Party inconsistent with its obligations under this Agreement; (d) is required to be disclosed in a judicial or administrative proceeding, or is otherwise requested or required to be disclosed by law or regulation, although the requirements of paragraph 4 hereof shall apply prior to any disclosure being made; and (e) is or has been independently developed by employees, consultants or agents of the Receiving Party without violation of the terms of this Agreement, as evidenced by the Receiving Party's records, and without reference or access to any Confidential Information.

2. Disclosure of Confidential Information.

From time to time, the Disclosing Party may disclose Confidential Information to the Receiving Party. The Receiving Party will: (a) limit disclosure of any Confidential Information to its directors, officers, employees, agents or representatives (collectively "Representatives") who have a need to know such Confidential Information in connection with the current or contemplated business relationship between the parties to which this Agreement relates, and only for that purpose; (b) advise its Representatives of the proprietary nature of the Confidential Information and of the obligations set forth in this Agreement, require such Representatives to be bound by written confidentiality restrictions no less stringent than those contained herein, and assume full liability for acts or omissions by its Representatives that are inconsistent with its obligations under this Agreement; (c) keep all Confidential Information strictly confidential by using a reasonable degree of care, but not less than the degree of care used by it in safeguarding its own confidential information; and (d) not disclose any Confidential Information received by it to any third parties (except as otherwise provided for herein).

3. Use of Confidential Information.

The Receiving Party agrees to use the Confidential Information solely in connection with the current or contemplated business relationship between the parties and not for any purpose other than as authorized by this Agreement without the prior written consent of an authorized representative of the Disclosing Party. No other right or license, whether expressed or implied, in the Confidential Information is granted to the Receiving Party hereunder. Title to the Confidential Information will remain solely in the Disclosing Party. All use of Confidential Information by the Receiving Party shall be for the benefit of the Disclosing Party and any modifications and improvements thereof by the Receiving Party shall be the sole property of the Disclosing Party.

4. Compelled Disclosure of Confidential Information.

Notwithstanding anything in the foregoing to the contrary, the Receiving Party may disclose Confidential Information pursuant to any governmental, judicial, or administrative order, subpoena, discovery request, regulatory request or similar method, provided that the Receiving Party promptly notifies, to the extent practicable, the Disclosing Party in writing of such demand for disclosure so that the Disclosing Party, at its sole expense, may seek to make such disclosure subject to a protective order or other appropriate remedy to preserve the confidentiality of the Confidential Information; provided that the Receiving Party will disclose only that portion of the requested Confidential Information that, in the written opinion of its legal counsel, it is required to disclose. The Receiving Party agrees that it shall not oppose and shall cooperate with efforts by, to the extent practicable, the Disclosing Party with respect to any such request for a protective order or other relief. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if the Disclosing Party is unable to obtain or does not seek a protective order and the Receiving Party is legally requested or required to disclose such Confidential Information, disclosure of such Confidential Information may be made without liability.

5. Term.

This Agreement shall remain in effect for a 6 month term (subject to a one year extension if the parties are still discussing and considering the Transaction at the end of the second year). Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Receiving Party's duty to hold in confidence Confidential Information that was disclosed during term shall remain in effect indefinitely.

6. Remedies.

Both parties acknowledge that the Confidential Information to be disclosed hereunder is of a unique and valuable character, and that the unauthorized dissemination of the Confidential Information would

destroy or diminish the value of such information. The damages to Disclosing Party that would result from the unauthorized dissemination of the Confidential Information would be impossible to calculate. Therefore, both parties hereby agree that the Disclosing Party shall be entitled to injunctive relief preventing the dissemination of any Confidential Information in violation of the terms hereof. Such injunctive relief shall be in addition to any other remedies available hereunder, whether at law or in equity. Disclosing Party shall be entitled to recover its costs and fees, including reasonable attorneys' fees, incurred in obtaining any such relief. Further, in the event of litigation relating to this Agreement, the prevailing party shall be entitled to recover its reasonable attorney's fees and expenses.

7. Return of Confidential Information.

Receiving Party shall immediately return and redeliver to Disclosing Party all tangible material embodying any Confidential Information provided hereunder and all notes, summaries, memoranda, drawings, manuals, records, excerpts or derivative information deriving therefrom, and all other documents or materials ("Notes") (and all copies of any of the foregoing, including "copies" that have been converted to computerized media in the form of image, data, word processing, or other types of files either manually or by image capture) based on or including any Confidential Information, in whatever form of storage or retrieval, upon the earlier of (i) the completion or termination of the dealings between the parties contemplated hereunder; (ii) the termination of this Agreement; or (iii) at such time as the Disclosing Party may so request; provided however that the Receiving Party may retain such of its documents as is necessary to enable it to comply with its reasonable document retention policies. Alternatively, the Receiving Party, with the written consent of the Disclosing Party may (or in the case of Notes, at the Receiving Party's option) immediately destroy any of the foregoing embodying Confidential Information (or the reasonably nonrecoverable data erasure of computerized data) and, upon request, certify in writing such destruction by an authorized officer of the Receiving Party supervising the destruction).

8. Notice of Breach.

Receiving Party shall notify the Disclosing Party immediately upon discovery of, or suspicion of, (1) any unauthorized use or disclosure of Confidential Information by Receiving Party or its Representatives; or (2) any actions by Receiving Party or its Representatives inconsistent with their respective obligations under this Agreement, Receiving Party shall cooperate with any and all efforts of the Disclosing Party to help the Disclosing Party regain possession of Confidential Information and prevent its further unauthorized use.

9. No Binding Agreement for Transaction.

The parties agree that neither party will be under any legal obligation of any kind whatsoever with respect to a Transaction by virtue of this Agreement, except for the matters specifically agreed to herein. The parties further acknowledge and agree that they each reserve the right, in their sole and absolute discretion, to reject any and all proposals and to terminate discussions and negotiations with respect to a Transaction at any time. This Agreement does not create a joint venture or partnership between the parties. If a Transaction goes forward, the non-disclosure provisions of any applicable transaction documents entered into between the parties (or their respective affiliates) for the Transaction shall supersede this Agreement. In the event such provision is not provided for in said transaction documents, this Agreement shall control.

10. Warranty.

NO WARRANTIES ARE MADE BY EITHER PARTY UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WHATSOEVER. The parties acknowledge that although they shall each endeavor to include in the

Confidential Information all information that they each believe relevant for the purpose of the evaluation of a Transaction, the parties understand that no representation or warranty as to the accuracy or completeness of the Confidential Information is being made by the Disclosing Party. Further, neither party is under any obligation under this Agreement to disclose any Confidential Information it chooses not to disclose.

11. Miscellaneous.

(a) This Agreement constitutes the entire understanding between the parties and supersedes any and all prior or contemporaneous understandings and agreements, whether oral or written, between the parties, with respect to the subject matter hereof. This Agreement can only be modified by a written amendment signed by the party against whom enforcement of such modification is sought.

(b) The validity, construction and performance of this Agreement shall be governed and construed in accordance with the laws of Tamil Nadu (state) applicable to contracts made and to be wholly performed within such state, without giving effect to any conflict of laws provisions thereof. The Federal and state courts located in Tamil Nadu (state) shall have sole and exclusive jurisdiction over any disputes arising under, or in any way connected with or related to, the terms of this Agreement and Receiving Party: (i) consents to personal jurisdiction therein; and (ii) waives the right to raise forum non conveniens or any similar objection.

(c) Any failure by either party to enforce the other party's strict performance of any provision of this Agreement will not constitute a waiver of its right to subsequently enforce such provision or any other provision of this Agreement.

(d) Although the restrictions contained in this Agreement are considered by the parties to be reasonable for the purpose of protecting the Confidential Information, if any such restriction is found by a court of competent jurisdiction to be unenforceable, such provision will be modified, rewritten or interpreted to include as much of its nature and scope as will render it enforceable. If it cannot be so modified, rewritten or interpreted to be enforceable in any respect, it will not be given effect, and the remainder of the Agreement will be enforced as if such provision was not included.

(e) Any notices or communications required or permitted to be given hereunder may be delivered by hand, deposited with a nationally recognized overnight carrier, electronic-mail, or mailed by certified mail, return receipt requested, postage prepaid, in each case, to the address of the other party first indicated above (or such other addressee as may be furnished by a party in accordance with this paragraph). All such notices or communications shall be deemed to have been given and received (a) in the case of personal delivery or electronic-mail, on the date of such delivery, (b) in the case of delivery by a nationally recognized overnight carrier, on the third business day following dispatch and (c) in the case of mailing, on the seventh business day following such mailing.

(f) This Agreement is personal in nature, and neither party may directly or indirectly assign or transfer it by operation of law or otherwise without the prior written consent of the other party, which consent will not be unreasonably withheld. All obligations contained in this Agreement shall extend to and be binding upon the parties to this Agreement and their respective successors, assigns and designees.

(g) The receipt of Confidential Information pursuant to this Agreement will not prevent or in any way limit either party from: (i) developing, making or marketing products or services that are or may be competitive with the products or services of the other; or (ii) providing products or services to others who compete with the other.

(h) Paragraph headings used in this Agreement are for reference only and shall not be used or relied upon in the interpretation of this Agreement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this Agreement as of the date first above written.

Disclosing Party	**Receiving Party**
Anisha Shanmugam	***J. Sibichakaravarthi***

Appendix 7: Sample Transcript

Participant- Indra from Chennai

R: As a trainer or any other teachers faced any struggles like teachers mindset, sitting on floor?

P: Yes, I too have that problem. When we sit on the floor, there is no support for back… we are also aging right? Because of that back pain … for a lot of people, genuinely it was a defect … what I will do is (giggle) I will keep 2 or 3 chairs together and I will lean against it…

R: Yes, Back support is needed.

P: That… was a major stress… 'You have to sit down!' … 'You have to sit on the floor!'

R: Why they didn't provide any small stool? … They didn't give?

P: (Silence- think she was drinking water- seems to have gestures NO)… Desk! In front of us desk will be there besides that nothing will be there behind us.

R: Hmmm…

P: That is difficult! That …. Everybody said that was a problem … after that they said 'Those who are really struggling put a chair and sit!' … that could have also been a barrier … definitely … because I really struggled in that …Besides that …

R: Any complaints from parents?

P: Ahhhhh.. from parents there was a lot! 'What is that? If it is 1st std. also same class, 2nd std. also same class, 3rd std. also same class… what is this, in one room itself …. 1st and 2nd std. shouldn't you keep separately?'…. parents complained a lot. For those small children even if we say 2nd std., when they say they are studying with the same teacher … amongst parents…. We called all the parents when we are teaching the lessons (in class) … we made the sit and showed them .. 'See … how we are doing it?'….

R: Oh they have observed …

P: They have sat insides and we have cleared it for them…

R: So, after that it changed?

P: Yes, it changed. They understood… 'Oh! In one class itself, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th std. are all together!'…that they understood. At first, they voiced their resistance for this… when all the children are in one class, when it was like, they were not able to accept it.

R: So parent's problem is all students were sitting in the same class?

P: Yes, in the same class. 'If it is 2nd std., they should go to another class.. to a different teacher!' That is their mindset…

R: Correct...

Appendix 8: Research Ethics form

School of Economics, Finance & Management

Application for Ethical Approval by Research Ethics Committee – Staff and PhD students

All research involving human participants[71] requires University approval. In most cases this can be given by the School of Economics, Finance & Management (EFM) Research Ethics Committee (REC), but in some cases your application will be referred by that committee to the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law Ethics Committee.

The completed form should be sent electronically to the REC Chair together with a copy of your proposal. In the case of research teams, the form should be completed by the principal investigator. The principal investigator should note that the questions apply to all members of the research team. You may be asked to supply supporting information such as a draft of a participant information form or letter. Not all sections of the form will necessarily apply to your research. Where you consider this to be the case please indicate with 'not applicable'. Notes to help you think about the ethical dimensions of your research are given at the back of the form.

Your application will be considered in the first instance by the School of EFM's Research Ethics Committee. It aims to provide you with a response within 10 working days. You can commence your study once your proposal has been approved by the Departmental Research Ethics Committee.

Please note that this is a tool designed to help you reflect on your ongoing responsibilities as a social researcher and is not meant as an additional obstacle to good research. The REC's remit is to act as a support for ethical research and it is happy to offer guidance at any stage of the research process.

Name: Anisha Shanmugam

E-mail: as12722@bristol.ac.uk

Post held or PhD student: PhD student

If PhD student, please state the name of your supervisor:

Dr. Humphrey Bourne and Dr. Deborah Wilson

[71] The ESRC Research Ethics Framework defines human participants as including living human beings and human data and records (such as, but not restricted to, medical, genetic, financial, personnel, criminal or administrative records and test results including scholastic achievements).

	Yes	No
Will your research involve **only** the use of large, secondary and anonymised datasets, data already in the public domain, or a review of published literature:	x	

If YES, you do not need to complete the rest of this form. Please go to the end of the form.

1. Will your proposed research involve contact with any of the following groups:

	Yes	No
Children/young people (younger than 18)		X
Vulnerable adults: meaning a person aged 18 or over who has a condition of the following type: i) a learning or physical disability; ii) a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs; or iii) a reduction in physical or mental capacity.		X

If you answer YES to either of the above questions, you will require a Criminal Records Check – see note 2.

	Yes	No
National Health Service patients, their carers, NHS staff recruited as research participants by virtue of their professional role, or access to or use of NHS premises		X

If you answer YES to this question, you will require NRES Approval – see note 3.

2. Will your proposed research gather *personal* data in relation to any of the following *sensitive* issues:

- Ethnic/racial origins
- Health issues
- Religious or political beliefs
- Disability
- Trade union membership
- Sexuality/practices
- Salary/personnel information

Yes	No
	X

If you answer YES to this question, you will need to take particular

note of data protection legislation – see note 4. In particular, it is a legal requirement to obtain written permission (eg, through a consent form) to collect and process such data

3. How are you planning to ensure that privacy and data confidentiality is respected to the greatest degree possible? Include details on how data will be anonymised, stored, and, ultimately, archived or destroyed. See note 4.

Data will be audio recorded and stored in a password protected file that will be accessed only by me. The names of all the participants, their designation and details of their institution will be anonymised during analysis. The data will be stored till the completion of the PhD after which, it will be deleted from the folders and storage/recording devices.

4. How are you planning to ensure informed consent? If you are not planning to gain consent in advance, please provide a full explanation. See note 6.

A Statement of Informed Consent is presented to all participants before they begin the interview. This will also be presented to higher authorities from whom prior permission for access is required. This statement will be presented to the research committee.

5. Will you be using any covert methods?

Yes	No
	X

If your answer is YES, please state what you propose to do and why these methods are justified.

6. How will you address any risk that participants will feel obliged to consent due to the influence of gatekeepers or other intermediaries? This might arise, for example, in the case of junior level employees. See note 5.

The initial meetings with the higher authorities in the concerned departments (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan – SSA) were set up using the access my family (my father in particular) has in these departments. We (as in my family) have professional connections with officials of the school education department as we own and manage educational institutions (private and aided schools) in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. Since many researchers find it easier to negotiate access in the research site using contact and connections (Duke, 2002; Reeves, 2010), I reached out to the concerned officers with the assistance of my father. I'd like to clearly state that we know these officials only on a professional capacity since they were our point of contact in terms of work related to the government for our educational institutions. They are in no way obliged to our institutions or the family.

A requisition letter was presented to the officer, who thereby gave me access to speak to other concerned authorities in the concerned department (SSA). This helped me gain the first point of access, ensuring the senior most authorities are aware of my work. They gave me the list of Block Resource Teacher Educators (BRTE) from the 2006 batch, who will form the initial sample for my

study. This is described in the sampling section of my progression document. Thereafter, I'll have to gain permission at different levels within the institution as the officials will put me onto their peers or subordinates. I will be able to approach my participants (BRTEs) through these subordinates.

At all stages, I will ensure that the concerned authorities are informed of the nature of my research project and will be made aware of the statement of informed consent. This is to ensure that they do not force the prospective/concerned participants to be a part of my study, thereby protecting the wellbeing of the participants if they withdraw from the study. I will reiterate to the participants (through the statement of informed consent and in person) that their participation in my research project is voluntary and their actions or statements will not be reported to their senior authorities. A consolidated summary of the research findings will be presented to the concerned department if required, ensuring the data is anonymised to protect the interest of the research participants.

7. Are there any health and safety risks (to either the researchers or the participants) associated with this research (over and above those associated with everyday life)? Please comment on how these have been addressed. If you have completed a risk assessment, please attach a copy. See note 7.

The research will be conducted in the state of Tamil Nadu, India (particularly the city of Chennai and the Pondicherry). Chennai being my home town, the risks of visiting schools in known areas within the city is limited. The interviews will be scheduled and conducted as per the convenience of the participants thereby causing minimal disruption. The town of Pondicherry is located two hours away from Chennai and hence I will be staying with family friends during data collection. I will be in regular contact with my supervisors to ensure they are aware of my data collection schedule. My family will be aware of schedule at all times. Therefore, the risk associated with this research (either to research participant or me) is low.

8. Is there anything further that you consider the School of EFM Research Ethics Committee should know about in relation to your proposed research?

None

Signed: Anisha Shanmugam

Supervisor signature (if applicable):

Date: 13th October, 2016

Please email your completed form to the Chair of the School Research Ethics Committee (Mary.Phillips@bris.ac.uk) with a copy of your proposal. PhD students should ensure that the form is signed by their supervisor.